OUTCOMES & IMPACT REPORT | FY2016
**ABOUT OUR PROGRAMMING.** UTEC aims to ensure social and economic success for proven-risk youth. Through sustained relationships with caring adults and intentional programming, we help youth to make significant changes in their lives.

We reserve our intensive program for youth who fit our impact youth criteria. We define *impact youth* as those youth who are seriously gang- and/or criminally-involved (with a priority on felony convictions and reentry from prison).

The model begins with *Street Outreach and Gang Peacemaking* and we invite youth to engage in UTEC’s *Transformational Beginnings* program. Youth who attend and persist advance to the *Workforce Development and Social Enterprises* program, where they get paid work experience. All youth are paired with a Transitional Coach (who others might call a case manager), who works with them on a wide set of goals. Youth develop critical skills in our workforce program, focused on engagement within social enterprises, and resume their education through academic classes with a project-based focus. UTEC’s social enterprises include mattress recycling, food services (including an on-site public café, catering services, and retail food production), and woodworking. We embed values of social justice and civic engagement in all programming, with special emphasis on our local and statewide organizing and policymaking work. UTEC also provides supplemental enrichment activities so that youth have additional safe outlets for expression, as well as increasing their sense of belonging to UTEC and the caring relationships fostered with staff.

**WHO WE SERVED IN 2016.** In fiscal year 2016 (FY16), we served 168 youth on a Transitional Coach portfolio. All of the youth we served had at least one targeted risk factor, and many met multiple risk criteria. The primary risk criteria required for eligibility into UTEC’s intensive program are serious criminal and/or gang involvement. We prioritize youth with the most serious criminal records (felony charges and convictions). Beyond these basic eligibility criteria, we give additional preference to youth who are pregnant or parenting and/or who lack a high school credential.

Of Youth Served in FY16, at Intake:

- **86%** had a criminal record
- **77%** were gang involved
- **44%** were pregnant/parenting
- **80%** lacked a high school credential, and
- **95%** had more than one risk factor including **14%** who had all four
OUTCOMES AND IMPACT 2016. UTEC aims to help youth secure three outcomes: reduced recidivism, increased employability, and increased educational attainment. We track these outcomes for 2 years after youth complete UTEC’s intensive programming.

Of Youth Engaged in UTEC Programming During the Year:
89% were NOT arrested during the year
24% obtained a high school credential

Of Youth Who Completed UTEC Programming 2 Years Ago:
83% had NOT been arrested since leaving UTEC
82% were currently employed

LOOKING AHEAD. We expect further improved outcomes for these impact youth due to various enhancements to program operations, as outlined below.

- **Engagement/Retention.** We aim to increase youth engagement and retention by (1) reducing Transitional Coaches’ portfolio ratio down to 1:15, and (2) working to address two major, external barriers to participation: lack of transportation and the need for childcare.

- **Criminal Involvement.** Increasing the Streetworker team’s size will allow us to further saturate high-crime neighborhoods, and, by doing so, better identify and respond to conflicts outside of UTEC. Streetworker capacity for reentry services will also expand – including pre-release services for up to 6 months prior to release, which we expect will significantly increase UTEC program enrollment and retention.

- **Employment.** Social enterprise expansion will increase job slots and extend the time that youth gain work experience in our enterprises before transitioning into external employment.

- **Education.** Lower portfolio ratios will be a significant driver in allowing for greater involvement of Transitional Coaches in educational coordination and ongoing support outside the classroom. Similarly, our ongoing efforts to integrate social justice issues across our educational curriculum reinforce these real-world connections and encourage complementary learning to improve classroom engagement.

- **Two-Generation Strategy.** UTEC is opening an onsite early childhood education center to help address youth barriers and as the first step in a two-generation strategy working with the family as a whole.

National Recognition Highlight (2016)
The National Institute of Justice identified UTEC as a model program in its Environmental Scan of Developmentally Appropriate Criminal Justice Responses to Justice-Involved Young Adults report.
UTEK aims to ensure social and economic success for proven-risk youth. Through sustained relationships with caring adults and intentional programming, we help youth to make significant changes in their lives. We take a staged approach: for our youth, programming intensity and structure increase with each stage, before providing for full transition back into the community. UTEC can devote upwards of 5 years toward working with and following up with each youth, to allow an extended period for youth to build resiliency and proficiency in positive outcome areas.

Driven by the concept of multiple chances and redemption, the model has relapse embedded within it, reflecting our philosophy that we must be relentless — never giving up on any young person.

**Population Served: Impact Youth**

We reserve our intensive program for youth who fit our **Impact youth** criteria. We define impact youth as those youth who are seriously gang- and/or criminally-involved (with a priority on felony convictions and reentry from prison). Most of the youth we serve lack a high school credential, and many are also young parents.

UTEK intentionally focuses on older youth (ages 17-25), and particularly those who have not succeeded in other, shorter-term programming or whom the judicial system has not adequately served. Research finds that even probation officers spend more time and resources on younger youth, pointing to a gap in the attention to and investment in older youth. To ensure that we serve the highest risk youth, we complete a Risk Screening at intake to assess youth eligibility.

**UTEK’s Hypothesis**

Individuals between the ages of 18 and 24 are “the most likely demographic to find their way into Massachusetts prisons and the quickest to return to them upon release.” For example, one analysis found that the 3-year re-arrest rate for prisoners...
released in 2005 was 78% for 18-24 year olds, compared to 72% for all released prisoners. Beyond the mid-20s, criminal involvement tends to drop off: it is rare for those who are criminally involved to have committed their first offense beyond this age. For this reason, UTEC focuses on keeping impact youth productively engaged during that critical highest risk period of 17 to 25 years old. If we can provide resources and positive support up to 25, impact youth are more likely to succeed in their mid-20s and beyond.

In addition, research shows that after 6 or 7 years without criminal activity, an ex-offender’s risk of future criminal activity is almost the same as for their peers without a criminal record. This suggests that if UTEC can keep youth with prior criminal records engaged for up to 6-7 years without further criminal involvement, those youth will have a very low likelihood of reoffending.

Based on this research, our primary hypothesis has two parts, as shown in the box at right.

**UTEC’s Primary Hypothesis**

1. If impact youth are productively engaged in UTEC activities and supports for an extended period during the critical ages of 17-25, then by 25, they will have the skills and resilience they need to maintain stable employment and avoid further criminal activity.

2. If we are able to specifically target and serve those impact youth (through the age of 25) who are most likely to recidivate and cause harm in our communities, success will also translate into a significant return on investment from a public health, public safety, and economic development perspective.

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**Overview of UTEC's Program Model**

**Streetworker Outreach and Gang Peacemaking** (1) builds relationships with youth who are involved in gangs and criminal activity on the streets and in prisons to promote peacemaking and (2) recruits youth into UTEC’s intensive model.

**INTENSIVE MODEL**

**Transformational Beginnings** is an orientation and acclimation period, during which youth gain work experience in our mattress recycling social enterprise and receive wraparound services to stabilize them to be ready for the next stage of programming.

**Transitional Coaching** goes beyond mentoring to (1) provide youth with wraparound services and connections to supports, (2) monitor youth progress, and (3) address barriers to youth participation and success.

**Social Enterprise-Based Workforce Development** provides youth with on-the-job training in additional social enterprises, personal development, high school credential preparation, and social justice instruction, career exploration, and eventually external employment.

**Supplemental Offerings** provide civic engagement activities, as well as drop-in afternoon enrichment activities.

**Follow-Up Services** for 2 years post-completion to provide continued support, collect longer-term data, and assess post-program outcomes.
About the Program Model

UTEC’s program model begins with Street Outreach and Gang Peacemaking, and we invite youth to engage in UTEC’s Transformational Beginnings (TB) program. Youth who attend and persist in TB advance to the Workforce Development and Social Enterprises (WFDSE) program. All youth are paired with a Transitional Coach (note: UTEC does not use the term “case” manager and instead emphasizes each Transitional Coach’s work with life portfolios), who works with them on a wide set of goals. Youth develop skills in our WFDSE program, focused on engagement within social enterprises, and resume their education through academic classes with a project-based focus. UTEC’s social enterprises include mattress recycling, culinary (an on-site public café, catering services, and retail food production), and woodworking. We embed values of social justice and civic engagement in all programming, with special emphasis on our local and statewide organizing and policymaking work. UTEC also provides supplemental enrichment activities so that youth have additional safe outlets for expression, as well as increasing their sense of belonging to UTEC and the caring relationships fostered with staff.

Here we present data for fiscal year 2016 (FY16) to answer two questions that are key to our success:

- Are we serving our target population?
- What outcomes are youth achieving?

Are We Serving Our Target Population?

In FY16, we served 168 youth in our intensive model. This number excludes any youth who participated in fewer than 15 days in TB, since we do not consider youth to be officially part of our program until they have been with us for 15 days; many youth who start with us in TB are not yet ready to engage fully in our programming. In addition, 76 youth completed at least one TB orientation during the year and 38 were new participants in our workforce program (i.e., completed TB and enrolled in a WFDSE crew) during the year. The chart below summarizes our numbers served. We also estimate that we served another 750+ youth (both target and non-target) through Streetworker engagement, enrichment activities, and other events.

Number of Target Youth Served in the Intensive Model, FY16

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New WFDSE Entrants (Moved from TB to a WFDSE Crew)</td>
<td>🧑‍🤝‍🧑 38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New TB Entrants (Completed TB Orientation)</td>
<td>🧑‍♀️ 76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Served</td>
<td>🧑‍♂️ 168</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
UTEC continues to determine the appropriate pace of new enrollments in TB and promotions to the WFDSE work crews. For the first part of the year, youth were taking more time to progress through the TB program than we had anticipated. However, toward the end of the year, we made a more concerted effort to help youth to move through more quickly, to ensure they were not getting stuck. The challenge then became ensuring that there were slots available on workforce crews in response to this increased influx of new participants.

We are working to identify strategies to keep youth from getting stuck in TB for too long before moving to a workforce crew. While the program is purposely set up to let youth go at their own pace, we want to ensure that they are making progress and not just staying in TB because it is easier than dealing with the additional responsibilities required to move to the next level. We are also monitoring how long youth participate in WFDSE crews, and how engaged they are, as youth attendance and engagement determine how many slots are available for youth exiting TB.

The youth we serve tend to be out of their teen years when they first enroll at UTEC. Although we serve youth ages 17 to 25, the average age of new entrants in FY16 (i.e., those who completed TB orientation during the year) was 21. This is in line with our focused attention on serving young adults (ages 18-25) who represent the largest percentage of likely individuals to recidivate.

All of the youth we served had at least one targeted risk factor and many met multiple risk criteria. The primary risk criteria required for eligibility into UTEC’s intensive program are serious criminal involvement and/or gang involvement. Beyond these basic eligibility criteria, we give additional preference to youth who are pregnant or parenting (44% this year) and/or who lack a high school credential (80%). The vast majority of youth (95%) had more than one risk factor, including 14% who had all four. We prioritize youth who have serious criminal records (felony charges and convictions).

The chart below shows the breakdown of risk factors for youth served in FY16. The chart shows both all youth served during the year (blue) and those who were new (orange) during that period. As the chart shows, new youth coming in have higher levels of criminal involvement, including serious involvement (felony charges and convictions), but lower levels of gang involvement and parenting compared to the total population served during the year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk Factor</th>
<th>All Youth in the Year</th>
<th>All New Youth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Criminally Involved</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gang Involved</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charged with a Felony</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convicted of a Felony</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No HS Credential</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pregnant/Parenting</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
We exceeded our target for reentry youth and were slightly under our target for young women. UTEC sets specific targets for two criteria: reentry and female participants.

- We set a reentry target to reflect our increasing focus on correctional facility in-reach to help youth make a successful transition from life behind the walls to life out in the community. We define reentry youth as anyone who engages with UTEC within 6 months of release from a correctional facility.

- We set a minimum target for female youth to ensure that our program prioritizes intentional outreach to serve young women, based on our belief in the benefit of having a mixed gender population.

As the chart at right shows, in FY16 we exceeded our target for reentry youth, due to the intensive focus of our streetworkers on prison in-reach. We were slightly under our target for young women: recruiting young women who fit our target criteria continues to be a challenge.

In FY17, we expect to serve an even higher percentage of reentry youth, as we now do increased in-reach to correctional facilities (both prisons and jails) to recruit new members.

Young men more often meet our criminally-involved and gang-involved criteria than young women, which can make recruiting young women a challenge. This data indicates that we will need to continue to be vigilant in recruiting young women, and may need to pursue additional outreach activities to target this demographic specifically.

percent of new youth in fy16 who were reentry or female

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Target</th>
<th>Actual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reentry</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td><img src="30.png" alt="30%" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34%</td>
<td><img src="34.png" alt="34%" /></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td><img src="25.png" alt="25%" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20%</td>
<td><img src="20.png" alt="20%" /></td>
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What Outcomes Are Youth Achieving?

UTEC aims to help youth secure three outcomes:
• Reduced recidivism,
• Increased employability, and
• Increased educational attainment.

Outcomes provided below are for two sets of youth: (1) those who participated in programming during the year, and (2) those who completed the program 2 years ago. Outcomes for the first set of youth show outcomes while in programming, while outcomes for the second group show long-term outcomes during the 2-year follow-up period.

More than 80% of youth refrained from additional engagement with the legal system. Specifically, of youth who engaged in UTEC’s Workforce during the program year, 98% were not convicted of a new crime, and 89% had not been arrested during the year. In addition, 83% of youth in the follow-up group were not arrested in the 2 years since leaving UTEC.

Of youth in the 2-year follow-up group, 82% were employed at the end of the year. This does not include youth who are internally employed by UTEC enterprises.

IN COMPARISON: Former inmates earn an average of 40% less than they would if they had not been incarcerated. In Massachusetts, this amounts to around $760 million in lost wages annually. UTEC works to help youth avoid this potential wage loss.

Of youth who participated in our educational classes in FY 2016, 24% obtained their high school credential during the year. Others who engaged in classes in FY16 were still working to complete their credential as of the end of the year, and hope to obtain it in FY17.

IN COMPARISON: Less than 20% of incarcerated males ages 18-24 nationally have attained at least a high school diploma or GED.
Looking Ahead

We expect further improved outcomes for these impact youth, due to various enhancements to program operations. We outline the key drivers and rationale for such improved outcomes below.

**Engagement/Retention**

As well recognized, an active relationship with a caring adult and a young person’s consistent attendance in positive youth development programming are key levers for youth success. We are investing our efforts toward improvements in these areas.

First, we plan to reduce Transitional Coaches’ portfolio ratio from the current figure of 1:20 down to 1:15 for increased personal engagement with each youth and his/her individual service plan. We will do so by adding more Transitional Coaches to our staff.

Secondly, our data shows that there are two major, external barriers to participation: lack of transportation and the need for childcare, given that half of the youth we serve are young parents themselves. We are prepared to address both of these barriers through the provision of agency-provided transportation and on-site early childhood education. In addition to the benefits of our young adults learning various family engagement strategies and advancing the early education of their kids, UTEC’s early childhood center also addresses a logistical challenge and allows our young parents to more consistently attend our intensive programming than they might otherwise.

**Criminal Involvement**

Both our data and the observations of our Streetworkers indicate that street-related conflict is a significant factor in youth disengagement (e.g., decreased daily attendance in programming), while increasing the likelihood to reoffend due to conflicts with other young people. Increasing the Streetworker team’s size will allow us to further saturate high-crime neighborhoods, and, by doing so, better identify and respond to conflicts outside of UTEC.

Streetworker capacity for reentry services will also expand – including pre-release services for up to 6 months prior to release, which we expect will significantly increase UTEC program enrollment and retention (in addition to pre-release planning as a documented factor in recidivism reduction). Our
county jail partners are developing new youth adult units, which will further aid these pre-release services. Finally and similar to the other outcomes above, our intentionally reduced portfolio ratio is a primary factor in enhancing the protective elements within a young person’s network to reduce criminal and gang activity.

**Employment**

Social enterprise expansion will both increase job slots and extend the time that youth gain work experience in our enterprises before transitioning into external employment. This extended timeline allows UTEC to provide meaningful work experience, including growth opportunities with, for example, customer service, event management, sourcing and purchasing, and marketing. These additional in-house skill levels also make for a stronger transition to external employment and an increased array of opportunities for graduates. We based this philosophy in the strong belief that meaningful work increases engagement for any employee, and particularly for disconnected young workers.

**Education**

We are confident that our high school credential attainment rates will continue to increase. In particular, our lower youth portfolio ratios will be a significant driver in allowing for greater involvement of Transitional Coaches in educational coordination and supports outside the classroom.

Similarly, our ongoing efforts to integrate social justice education across our educational curriculum reinforce these real-world connections and encourage complementary learning to improve classroom engagement. With the support of a new senior education staff member, we are building a curriculum to link learning across our program components, through intentional learning opportunities and core competencies built into our social justice activities, workforce development programming, as well as our classroom learning.

**Two-Generation Strategy**

UTEC’s early childhood education center is central to the development of our two-generation strategy. Two-generation approaches benefit both parents and children, to address their needs individually and the needs of the family as a whole. These strategies also serve to help address lasting impacts on families: children who are born into poverty are significantly more likely than their more affluent peers to remain in poverty as adults, to drop out of school, and to become teen parents.

To break this cycle, two-generation approaches provide programming focused on family needs related to education, economic supports, health and well-being, and social capital. Such approaches aim to reduce inequalities and close the gaps in education and economic outcomes.

For young parents with histories of serious criminal or gang involvement, two-generation programs can help decrease recidivism or arrests among the parents. This reduction in criminal involvement of parents can in turn contribute to the reduction of risk to their children. UTEC is uniquely positioned to engage proven-risk young families and to double its potential impact on “social and economic success” for the community’s most disconnected youth.

[UTEC is] turning gang members into productive citizens through programs like their culinary institute. In talking about their success, their enthusiasm to do more is contagious. Our problem is not that no one has figured out what works. Just the opposite.

MA Governor Charlie Baker 2015 Inaugural Address
Citations


10. For more information about two generation approaches, see the Aspen at the Aspen Institute’s website: http://ascend.aspeninstitute.org.

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