

PILLARS OF PROGRESS:  
**TIME, TRUST & COMMUNITY**



**JUST A  
START**

**2023 IMPACT REPORT**

# LETTER FROM LEADERSHIP



As we reflect on the past year, we're reminded of the profound impact we've had together. A major milestone was our inaugural Families Moving Forward cohort increasing their collective annual salary by over \$500,000 and their savings by \$110,000. The program's success rested on three pillars: Time, Trust, and Community, which also support the rest of Just A Start's work in "Building Homes, Careers, and Futures."

**Time** has been our silent partner, allowing us to witness and support our participants' growth and transformation. From the first handshake to the graduation ceremonies for our Education and Training programs, it has been a joy to support 99 adult and youth students as they worked with our instructors, mentors, and staff for months to develop skills and build their **careers**.

**Trust** is the bond we build with everyone seeking stability and hope. This year, we served 1,912 at-risk tenants through our Housing Stabilization program, with 79% remaining stably housed. Due to their trust in our model and the support of our team, they are able to continue building their **homes**.

**Community** is Just A Start's heartbeat. It is the strength that propels us forward and ensures no one is left behind. With your outpouring of support, we exceeded our fundraising goal for the Economic Mobility Hub at Rindge Commons, raising \$5.6 million in our first capital campaign. As we move into our new home, bringing together education, job training, affordable housing, universal pre-k classrooms, and services for North Cambridge, we are excited to continue this journey with you, creating spaces where everyone can have an opportunity to build their **future**.

With your support, we've made significant strides in 2023 and are poised to continue guiding individuals and families on their path to economic stability.

Sincerely,



Carl Nagy-Koechlin,  
Executive Director



Junardy Jean Charles,  
Board Chair

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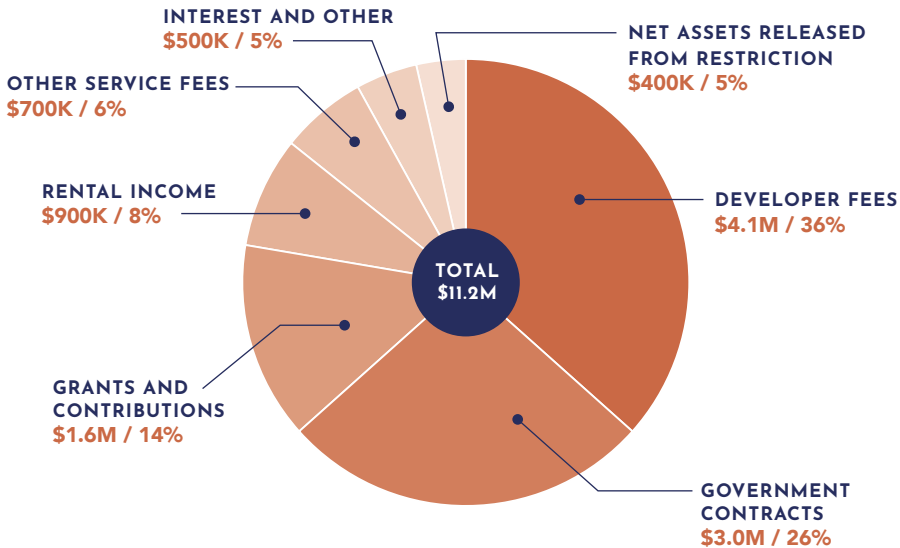
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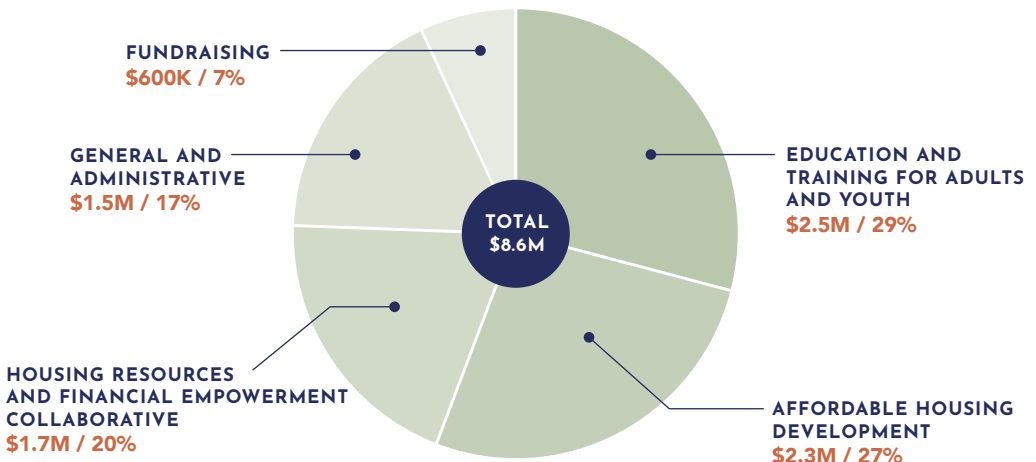
YEAR END DECEMBER 31, 2023

# RESOURCE ALLOCATION

## OPERATING REVENUE



## OPERATING EXPENSES



# TIME BUILDING CAREERS

## ADULT CAREER TRAINING

In 2023, the Adult Career Training Program achieved its highest graduation rate, with 35 out of 36 students completing the training they need to secure new careers in IT and biotechnology field. Graduates who obtained in-field employment saw an average salary increase of over \$20,000. This nine-month, tuition-free program prepares students for sustainable careers with local employers, offering industry-aligned education, soft skills development, and support services to overcome barriers to career advancement.



**“My story is a testament to the life-altering impact of the Just A Start program, which has empowered me and many others to break the cycle of hardship and achieve our dreams.”**

—JEAN GERALD SURPRIS, IT PROGRAM GRADUATE

## YOUTHBUILD

YouthBuild Construction students collaborated with the Cambridge Housing Authority on construction work at Lincoln Way, partnered with Compass Contracting for renovations at 95 Fayerweather Street in Cambridge, and began work on a new patio for the residents of 1175 Cambridge Street. They also built and installed community fridge sheds in Winter Hill, Dorchester, and Union Square to combat food insecurity.

62

YouthBuild students served in 2023—recruiting the largest number of students to the program since before the COVID-19 pandemic

19

YouthBuild students passed their High School Equivalency Test (HiSET)



# TRUST

## BUILDING HOMES

### HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

We currently operate and maintain 640 affordable apartments across 19 housing properties in Cambridge, providing homes for 1,500 residents. We closed financing on **52 New Street** in Cambridge (106 apartments) and the project is slated for completion in 2025. At **Rindge Commons**, Phase I saw the completion of 24 apartments in 2023, and Phase II, currently in the pre-development phase, will add 77 additional apartments. Additionally, we have five more projects in our pipeline, totaling 95 new apartments, including **24 Webster Avenue**, in Somerville's Union Square.

### HOUSING RESOURCES

Resident Services Coordinators supported 615 families with services such as rental and utility assistance, as well as referrals for employment and elder care. In April, we launched the **Digital Navigator Program**, led by a Just A Start IT Careers Program graduate. The Navigator has assisted 112 households in securing low-cost internet, troubleshooting devices, and completing online applications for benefits, banking, and medical records. To date, 214 help sessions have been conducted through this program.

### HOUSING STABILITY

# 1,912

at-risk tenants served through rental assistance and mediation services

# 79%

retained housing stability for 12 months after participating in our program

### CONDO BUYBACK PROGRAM

Working closely with the City of Cambridge, we rehabbed 9 units, helped 4 families buy their new homes, and acquired 7 homes to be restored for future homeowners.

### HOME IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

6 Union Street, Cambridge, MA



June 2022  
(before)



September 2023  
(after)

# \$379,896

in home improvement loans were issued, supporting 14 homes

Total number of households provided rehab or other services to mitigate health hazards

# 8

# COMMUNITY

## BUILDING FUTURES



### THE FINANCIAL EMPOWERMENT COLLABORATIVE LOCATED AT 55 NORFOLK STREET

Expanding our community to Central Square, we renovated this 920-square-foot storefront space which opened in 2024 as the new home for Just A Start's financial empowerment programs. We are grateful for the support of our partners, including the Mayor of Cambridge, the City Manager of Cambridge, and the Cambridge Redevelopment Authority.

# \$583,328

Total amount returned to the community in refunds and \$135,577 in Earned Income Tax Credits through our Free Tax Preparation Services

# \$500,000

Aggregate increase in income over 3 years for the 25 Families Moving Forward participants

# \$25k

Average FMF Participant Income Increase

# \$110k

Collective FMF Cohort Savings Increase

### FAMILIES MOVING FORWARD

The Families Moving Forward (FMF) pilot was a three-year program that provided holistic support and empowerment tools to help 25 families with children in poverty gain economic mobility and self-sufficiency.

Learn more by reading our recently published white paper report at <https://justastart.org/publications/>.



## ***Our New Home!***

# **THE ECONOMIC MOBILITY HUB AT RINDGE COMMONS**

The Hub is a new 70,000-square-foot mixed-use development at the intersection of Rindge Avenue and Alewife Brook Parkway in North Cambridge. It integrates a state-of-the-art education and job training center, affordable housing, childcare, and community services. Designed to the Passive House standard, The Hub sets a benchmark for environmental and energy efficiency, reinforcing Cambridge's leadership in sustainability.

**THANK YOU!** To support Just A Start's boldest and most complex project to date, we launched a capital campaign for The Hub. Thanks to your generosity, we have raised a total of \$5.6 million, exceeding our campaign goal of \$4.25 million by over 30%.

### **PLEASE NOTE OUR NEW ADDRESS:**

Just A Start  
430 Rindge Avenue  
Cambridge, MA 02140

*Headquarters: Suite #301*  
*Adult Career Training: Suite #302*  
*YouthBuild: Suite #202*





# GIFTS FROM OUR CARING COMMUNITY

Thank you to our generous donors and supporters! The list below reflects gifts made from January 1 to December 31, 2023.

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## LEGACY DONORS

*We are so grateful to those who have included Just A Start in their estate plans.*

Paul E. Fallon

Deborah Lerne Goodman and John Goodman

Mary Leno

Loren J. Wilson

*Including Just A Start in your will, trust, or as a beneficiary of your retirement plan or other account is a great way to sustain the community, and may also provide tax benefits for you and your family. If you are interested in learning more, please contact Carmen Chan at [CarmenChan@justastart.org](mailto:CarmenChan@justastart.org) or call 617-918-7558.*

## POISED FOR GREAT SUCCESS

Your continued support is the cornerstone of our success. Through your commitment, we are able to uphold the pillars of progress — Time, Trust, and Community — at Just A Start. Thank you for your support as we build a brighter, more equitable future in Cambridge and beyond.

With all our programs under one roof, we are poised for great success. This coming year, we will be:

**Doubling the number of students in our  
Adult Career Training Programs:**

*72 students to achieve new heights in their careers.*

**Launching a new YouthBuild Solar Pilot Program:**

*Preparing participants for the solar workforce.*

**Developing a 5-year strategic plan:**

*Realigning Just A Start with the need of today's community.*