



IMPROVING CAREER OUTCOMES  
FOR YOUNG ADULTS WITH  
DISABILITIES SINCE 1989

# The Power of a Job

We all want to reach our potential in life, which often begins with a meaningful job where our unique talents can shine. For young people who receive or received special education services, however, landing that first job can seem difficult or even impossible. That's why Bridges from School to Work (Bridges) was created in 1989.

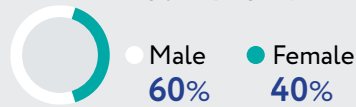
Bridges matches the interests and abilities of young people with disabilities to the needs of

employers. Yet the real impact extends far beyond just landing a job. Bridges helps young adults with disabilities keep and progress on the job. Bridges instills character, builds confidence, and steers young adults toward a future filled with possibilities. In 12 major U.S. cities, Bridges unlocks the potential of young people with disabilities, transforming lives through the power of a job.

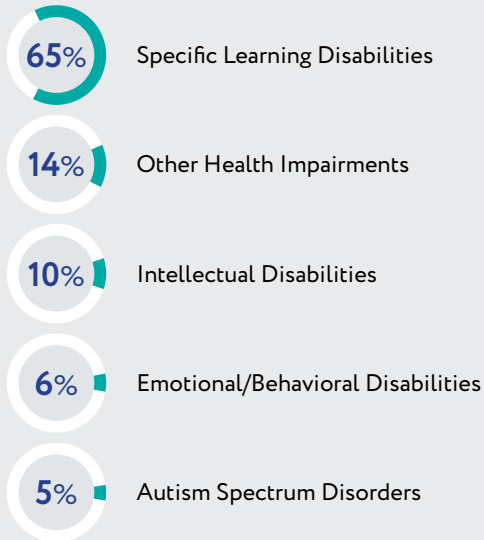


## BRIDGES DEMOGRAPHICS

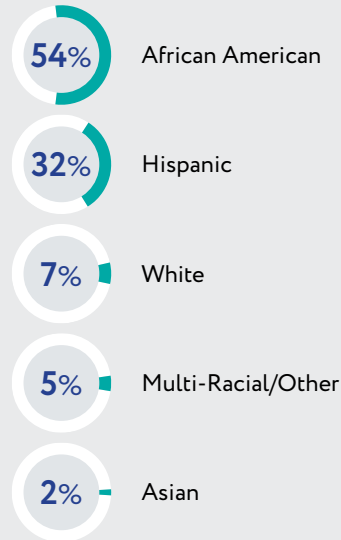
### YOUTH BY GENDER



### YOUTH BY DISABILITY TYPE



### YOUTH BY ETHNICITY



### SINCE 1989, BRIDGES HAS WORKED WITH

26,000 Youth

5,400 Employers

900 High schools

# Bridges Quick Facts

**77%**

of Bridges participants are still in high school at the time they enroll.

**90%**

of Bridges participants are between the ages of 16 and 20.



With programs across **12** major U.S. cities, Bridges maintains partnerships with some of the nation's **largest** school districts, some which have endured for more than **25** years.

OVER  
**90%**

of Bridges participants and employers report a positive experience with the program.



95% of Bridges participants still live at home with their parent or guardian.



Nine of our 10 program directors across the country began their Bridges careers as Employment Specialists, the direct service personnel who work with participants to prepare for, find and succeed in jobs.



85% of Bridges participants heard about Bridges through a teacher or through a Bridges Employment Specialist who visited their high school.

# How Does Bridges Recruit Youth?

Across our 12 cities, Bridges maintains longstanding partnerships with some of our nation's largest school districts. Bridges' Youth Employment Specialists make weekly visits to high schools in these districts and work with educators to identify, recruit, and enroll students. Most are high school seniors who receive special education services.

In these schools, Youth Employment Specialists function as adjunct faculty and itinerant instructors, using classrooms and other meeting space to prepare students for job interviews, job offers, and ongoing employment that continues beyond their high school graduation.

Youth from 17 to 24 are eligible for Bridges, but the average age at enrollment is usually around 19. Youth no longer in high school can apply for services on our website or through vocational rehabilitation agencies and other community-based organizations. Out-of-school youth can work with Youth Employment Specialists at a local Bridges office, in a library, coffee shop, or other public space.

Bridges from School to Work operates with a philosophy of positive youth development, an approach that focuses on youth assets instead of their deficits. Bridges, therefore, emphasizes what young adults with disabilities *can* do instead of what they cannot do.

With the launch of our New York City program in 2019, we now work with the nation's largest school district, where 200,000 students receive special education services. Our nation's second- and third-largest school districts, Los Angeles Unified and Chicago Public Schools respectively, are among those districts whose Bridges partnerships have endured 30-plus years. These districts, combined with others in Atlanta, Baltimore, Boston, Dallas, Fort Worth, Oakland, Philadelphia, San Francisco, and Washington, DC, have all been integral to our success in enrolling 26,000 youth since 1989.



Few organizations are as effective as Bridges from School to Work when it comes to removing barriers to employment for young people with disabilities.

ROBERT A. KRAUSE,  
CEO, JOHNSON SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION

The Johnson Scholarship Foundation's giving priorities include education and employment programming for economically disadvantaged students, Indigenous communities, and students with disabilities. Visit Johnson Scholarship Foundation for more information.

# Established by the Marriott Family

The descendants of J. Willard and Alice S. Marriott, the founders of Marriott International, established Bridges from School to Work (Bridges) in 1989 to improve employment outcomes for youth with disabilities. In 1990, Bridges began serving youth in Montgomery County, Maryland, a suburb of Washington, DC. From there the program expanded to serve some of our nation's largest school districts across the cities of Atlanta, Baltimore, Boston, Chicago, Dallas, Fort Worth, Los Angeles, New York City, Oakland, Philadelphia, San Francisco, and Washington, DC.

In these 12 cities, Youth Employment Specialists now work each year with approximately 200 high schools to prepare youth with disabilities ages 17-24 for the competitive labor market, matching them to quality jobs with supportive employers that we believe will improve their career and earning prospects through their 20s and 30s.

Researchers have demonstrated that the single most important factor in overcoming adversity is a long-term, nurturing relationship with a reliable, caring adult. In our Bridges program, the job title for that person is a Youth Employment Specialist.

Bridges' personnel understand that for the program to succeed, they cannot concern themselves only with the needs of the young adults who enroll; they must also satisfy the needs that business and industry have for qualified workers. This employer-driven approach has been part of the program's philosophy since its inception. Bridges brings together employers who need good workers with youth with disabilities having trouble connecting to jobs.



Bridges From School To Work has been a tremendous asset and collaborative partner with Fort Worth Independent School District Special Education and Transition Support Services for eight years. We are especially pleased with the "hands-on" approaches taken by Bridges staff members. The FWISD Special Education Department readily endorses Bridges From School To Work for working so effectively with students, parents, schools, and businesses.

DIANNE KENDRICK HAWKINS, ED. D.  
DIRECTOR | SPECIAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT  
FORT WORTH INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

# Bridges Participates in NextGen

Bridges is participating in a federally funded research study known as the NextGen Project. NextGen began during the 2021 academic year and will continue through 2024.

NextGen, or the Next Generation of Enhanced Employment Strategies Project, is a collaboration among several organizations. It is being led by the Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation (OPRE) in the Administration for Children and Families within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The Social Security Administration (SSA) is also a partner on the project.

Mathematica, a research organization, will lead the study, which will be a randomized control trial (RCT), the gold standard for measuring program efficacy.

Ultimately, the NextGen RCT will be among only a few of its kind for young adults with disabilities as they leave high school and enter the workforce. The study will provide actionable information to policymakers about interventions for assisting individuals facing complex challenges as they find jobs, advance in the labor market, and improve their economic security.

## CARF Accreditation

Congratulations to our Chicago and Los Angeles Bridges offices for earning three-year CARF accreditation. CARF stands for Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities, and CARF International is an independent, nonprofit accreditor of health and human services providers.

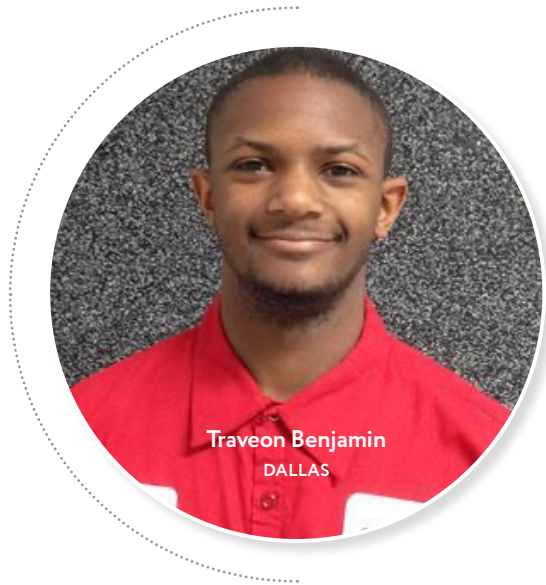


If you are a parent, Bridges is the best way to have a partner that shares your goals and dreams for your child thriving in a job that gives him purpose, dignity and real-world experience.

SHANNON W.  
DALLAS-FORT WORTH PARENT

All Bridges personnel share a belief in the transformational power of a job for young adults with disabilities.

# Job Stability



Traveon Benjamin of Dallas has worked with Aramark Uniform Services for six years. Traveon’s Aramark tenure is especially impressive when you consider that young adults hold on average five or six different jobs between the ages of 18 and 24, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

When Traveon was 20 and a student at Multiple Skills Magnet Center, a Dallas vocational school where he learned how to work in a commercial laundry, he enrolled in Bridges.

Bridges personnel knew that Traveon would be an ideal candidate for a job at Aramark Uniform Services, where he would work as part of a large team that loads, sorts, washes, dries, and presses tons of laundry processed at the facility every day.

Dallas Bridges Director Rob Mollard says “Traveon is one of the best workers Aramark Uniform Services has ever seen. He uses DART public transit for his daily commutes to the Aramark facility near Love Field, and he never misses a day of work. He has accumulated so much paid time off that his supervisor recently made him take a vacation.”

Now 26, Traveon is a seasoned Aramark team member, working full-time with benefits and earning a competitive salary that makes a significant

difference in his family’s overall household income. Traveon even helps train and orient new Aramark employees, showing them how to navigate the large warehouse facility that processes truckloads of laundry from area hospitals, universities, and cafeterias. “Traveon is such an asset that Aramark has recently hired another participant from the Bridges program,” says Mollard.

“

Traveon is one of the best workers Aramark Uniform Services has ever seen.

ROB MOLLARD  
DALLAS BRIDGES DIRECTOR

Since 1989, Bridges from School to Work (Bridges) has worked to increase employment rates and improve career outcomes for young adults with disabilities in our nation’s largest cities and neediest school districts.

# Bridges in Action!



After successfully completing a 60-day part-time, paid internship with JPMorgan Chase's Business Solutions Team (BeST) in Chicago, Bridges participants Jordan Jackson and Bianca Tinsley have worked as Transaction Specialists since December 2021. With regular employee status, they work 30 hours per week and are eligible for company benefits.

Before joining JPMorgan Chase, Bianca and Jordan had impressive work histories with several other employers: both held paid positions with Chicago's Shedd Aquarium. In addition, Bianca was an employee of both Staples and Aramark, while Jordan worked for Ross Dress for Less.

These young adults are prime examples of the many participants each year who, through Bridges, progress beyond their initial entry-level jobs into positions with higher earning potential and greater responsibility.

Valuing a diverse and talent-driven workforce, JPMorgan Chase is frequently honored as one of the world's best employers and is recognized as a leader in hiring people with disabilities. For more information about the company and its BeST program, visit [JPMorgan Chase Driving Inclusion Through On-the-Job Training](#) on the EARN website. You can also [watch a new video about BeST](#) on the Chase YouTube channel.

**Bridges is a lifeline for youth, especially for those whose employment barriers are compounded by the trauma, chaos, and stressors of poverty.**



With regular employee status, Bianca and Jordan work 30 hours per week at JPMorgan Chase and are eligible for company benefits.



# Career Pathways for Youth



Terence Vasquez (LEFT)  
BOSTON

As a high school student at Excel Academy in Boston, Terence Vasquez worked part-time for two years in an AMC theatre. When he graduated in June 2021, he wanted to transition to a full-time job with advancement potential.

As part of his goal for pursuing a more career-oriented position, his Bridges Employer Representative, Sandra Meetran (right), helped Terence replace a lost Social Security card, create his résumé, fine tune his interviewing skills, and explore different job options. He was interested in travel and hospitality, so Terence and Sandra pursued opportunities at the Omni Seaport Hotel.

After Terence aced his interviews with three different Omni Seaport Hotel managers, he was hired on the spot. Since August of 2021, Terence has worked as an Omni Front Desk Agent in this 1,054-room property. He earns an excellent wage and is excited about the hotel’s advancement opportunities. In March 2022, Terence won the “Front of House Omni Service Champion” award.

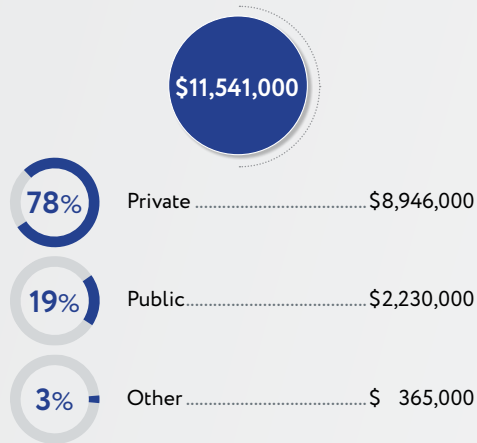


Since August of 2021, Terence has worked as a Front Desk Agent at the 1,054 room Omni Seaport Hotel. In March 2022, Terence won the “Front of House Omni Service Champion” award.

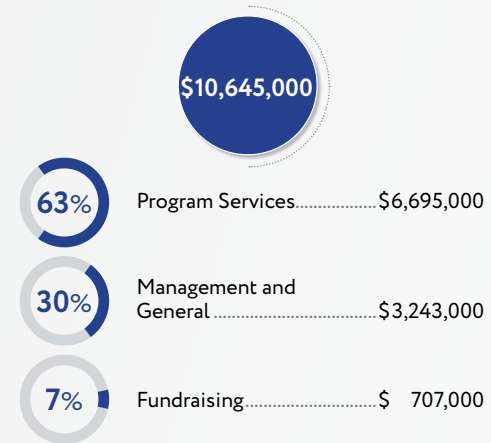
Among Bridges participants, having a disability is only one of multiple employment barriers that may make it harder for them to achieve their education and career goals. Their disability can be compounded by other factors, such as the trauma of adverse childhood experiences that impede their ability to think, learn, and feel psychologically safe and secure.

# Financial Highlights

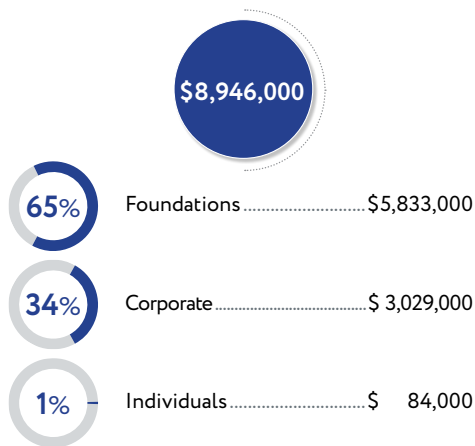
## BRIDGES REVENUE, 2022



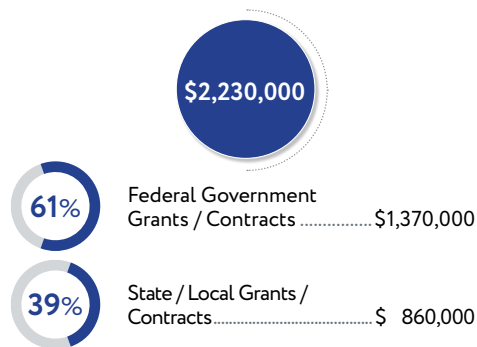
## BRIDGES EXPENDITURES, 2022



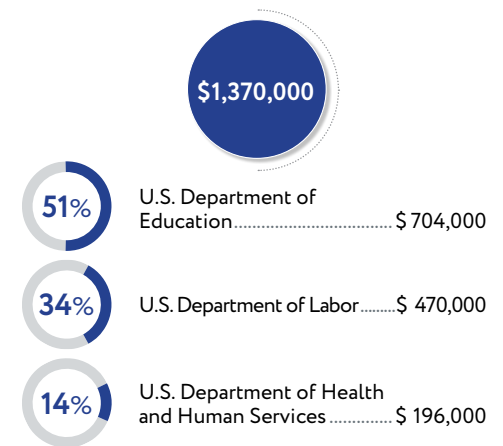
## BRIDGES REVENUE PRIVATE



## BRIDGES REVENUE PUBLIC



## BRIDGES FEDERAL FUNDING BY AGENCY



# Annual Bridges Gala

We held another successful annual fundraiser gala on June 26, 2023, at the Marriott Marquis in Washington, DC. Richard E. Marriott, Board Chair, Bridges from School to Work and Host Hotels & Resorts, and his co-chair, Julie Sweet, Chair and Chief Executive Officer, Accenture, welcomed over 1,000 guests, representing more than 170 sponsors. We raised \$2,192,772 in support of Bridges' mission to transform lives of young adults with disabilities through the power of a job.

This year, we presented Marco Beltran, a former Bay-Area Bridges participant, with the Stephen G. Marriott Youth Achievement Award. Today, Marco lives in Seattle and works as a para-professional in a school for young students on the autism spectrum. Richard Lui, MSNBC and NBC news anchor hosted the event and interviewed NCAA Wrestling Champion, Commentator and Author, Anthony Robles.



LEFT TO RIGHT: Ria Santos, San Francisco Youth Employment Specialist; Marco Beltran, Youth Achievement Award Recipient; and Richard Marriott, Chairman of Bridges from School to Work.

Our June 2023 gala generated \$2,192,772 in support of Bridges' mission to transform lives of young adults with disabilities through the power of a job.

## TOP BRIDGES GALA SPONSORS FOR 2023

### PREMIER

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\*New national office address as of fall 2023