



Bronx Business Tech Center Comprehensive Report
October 2019- April 2020

**CUNY-New York City Council-Funded Initiatives at the Technology Incubator and
Innovation Lab, CUNY on the Concourse, Lehman College, CUNY**

Introduction

For the past four years Lehman College's [School of Continuing and Professional Studies](#) (SCPS) has received funding from the New York City Council to set up and maintain a Business Tech Center in the Bronx for tech freelancers, local small business, and entrepreneurs from underserved communities. The Bronx Business Tech Center's mission is to foster economic and technological development by providing a unique work-space (offices and access to conference rooms and classrooms) as well as access to technology and to training that local entrepreneurs otherwise would not be able to afford. The Bronx Business Tech Center provides local small businesses and startups with the resources to bring their business plans from concept to reality and move them up to the next level. State-of-the-art equipment and space enables the current 18 entrepreneurs to be nimble and responsive inhabitants of the digital economy.

Lehman College values the opportunities that the Tech Center brings to the college and its surrounding communities. Eighty Percent (80%) of Lehman students come from the Bronx and Upper Manhattan and a similar percentage of the faculty live locally. Developing small businesses and sole proprietor entrepreneurs is critical to the economic development of the Bronx, which is 64th out of the 64 counties that comprise New York state in terms of poverty. It is estimated that 50% Lehman students experience food insecurity.

City Council funding has an impact far beyond the initial grant by allowing Lehman College to leverage additional resources whose impact is included in this report. Over 3,630 individuals have participated in training, events and used services at CUNY on the Concourse, both long terms and short term. The Tech Center is the only entity of its kind in the Bronx and attracts interest and funding which increases and maximizes the impact of the grant from the city council. Additionally, since the Tech Center is the home of the Augmented Reality/Virtual Reality Academy and Training Center, it is possible to leverage additional funding and opportunities which are included in this report to show how the Center builds on existing resources and leverage additional grants to create a vibrant technology hub on the Grand Concourse.

1. Business Incubation
2. Small Business Consulting Practice, Cohorts 3 and 4
3. Virtual Reality Training Academy, Unity training and NYU Partnership
4. Technology Infrastructure Upgrade and Scholarships
5. Economic Modeling Specialists Intl. (Emsi) licenses, business analytics management.

At time of writing this report New York City is wrestling with the impact of the corona virus, Covid-19, and the Bronx Business Tech Incubator advisor is working with the businesses to apply for funding to cover their losses and tide them over until the economy is more stable. This is critically important and crucial to the ongoing success of the businesses who are located at CUNY on the Concourse and those served by the all the services of the Bronx Business Tech Incubator. AR/VR training on the Unity platform is now remote and has successfully transitioned online and all other services, such as counseling, application assistance and workshops are offered via Zoom and other platforms.

1. Business Incubation

The Lehman College's [Bronx Business Tech Incubator](#) (BBTI) at CUNY on the Concourse, sponsored by the NYC Council, is undergoing a categorical transformation. BBTI is currently positioned as a destination point for Bronx entrepreneurs and small businesses who are seeking office space, technology expertise, financial capital and strategic business planning. BBTI is offering additional customized services and programming to the clients through the Small Business Development Center's rich programs and offerings.



BBTI businesses and Lehman College students,



Worldwide Veterans and Family Services Program, director, Marisa Estrella, and other businesses participating in a n economic development seminar.

The 18 businesses in the BBTI use the incubator to conduct business meetings with their clients in the conference room, use classroom facilities to offer classes and conduct testing, work with Lehman College interns in the Small Business Consulting Practice (SBCP) and meet with their business advisor.

1.1 Business support and Bronx Business Tech Incubator, Small Business Development Center

The incubator clients are supported by a dedicated Business Advisor who performs one-to-one counseling and mentoring to expand and grow businesses. The Business Advisor assists clients with financial statement projections, loan packaging, creating business plans, legal aspects of starting and growing a business, strategic planning, creating marketing strategies by using social media and building web site. The business advisor understands that the businesses are at different levels of development and she tailors her guidance appropriately. The business advisor meets with BBTI clients regularly, following up as needed. Incubator clients are able to use paid interns from the Small Business Consulting Practice (SBCP) program, free of charge. 15 businesses from SBCP cohort 3 and 19 businesses from SBCP cohort 4 received support for web site development, social media marketing and business plan development. For detail report refer to chapter 2 and the appendixes links.

- Students worked with many businesses on a variety of projects.
- All of the students' clients were local small businesses, in our communities that were in the process of expanding
- All Clients were acquired via the "Meet The Interns" event held at Lehman's tech incubator.
- Small Business from the BBTI and the SBDC network were invited.
- 37 Business owners from 25 companies attended the event.
- Students were able to meet and evaluate all the businesses and were placed with businesses who had a mutual interest in working together.

Another source of support for the Business Tech Incubator businesses is the Small Business Development Center (SBDC), which has operated at Lehman College since 2000. In fiscal 2020, 464 clients were counseled with economic impact of \$15,205,24, thereby creating or saving 262 jobs. During the same period the SBDC conducted 64 training events with 3,110 attendees.

The support services provided by the SBDC, comprising counseling, business plan guidance and technical assistance with procurement and loan acquisition, give new and start-up businesses help with issues such as what to charge for their services and what sort of social media best match their goods and services. The SBDC provides the needed boost to move the businesses forward, to hire staff and expand their operations. The Tech Center at CUNY on the Concourse provides an office and conference space for the SBDC for their support services, including counseling and loan packaging.

With the technological infrastructure of CUNY on the Concourse, counseling support from the business advisor and the SBDC and the extensive resources of Lehman College, the Bronx Business Tech Incubator provides an environment for companies to turn innovative ideas into profitable realities, that is, to bridge the gap between dreams and execution. As a recent example of the impact

of engagement with the Small Business Development Center at the Bronx Business Tech Incubator, BBTI/SBDC partner, TruFund Financial Services, has made a capital grant of \$51,000 to one of tech incubator's most successful clients, Leverage Assessments (certified M/WBE).



Bronx Business Tech Incubator Clients

	Business Name	Business owner	Business Focus
1	Orcinus	Vincent Navarro	Technology
2	Vivid Imagination Program	Branden Baskin	Technology
3	Sherman Creek Conservancy Inc.	Obed Fulcar	Technology
4	VR Stratagem Corp.	Pablo Alvarez	Technology
5	Leverage Assessments	Kyana Beckles	Technology
6	LearnTechTeach	Khaita Wasiyo	Technology
7	Traillo	Jose Salcedo	Technology, Food
8	Ramp Up Media	Wil Rampersaud	Technology, Digital Marketing
9	X-treme Care	Hanna Che	Healthcare
10	RTS Corp	Luz-Maria Lambert	Tax, Financial Services
11	Optimization With an Impact	Luis Taveras	Tax, Education
12	H.T. Business Solutions	Heidi Torres	Bookkeeping
13	Office of Wilfred Holness	Wilfred Holness	Legal
14	Modern Commercial Capital Institute	Demond Wilkerson	Lending and Real Estate
15	KEZ	Emmanuel Ihekwoaba	Education
16	Pit Stop Help For Veterans	Steven Waters	Veteran Services
17	Worldwide Veterans and Family Services Program	Marisa Estrella	Veteran Services
18	Roman \$Roman	Jessica Marcano	Cleaning Services

Eight (45%) of BBTI businesses are in the technology sector, five are in Finance, Tax, Legal and Real Estate industries, two in Veteran Services, one in Education and one in Cleaning Industry.

1.2 Business Program Workshops offered by the Small Business Development Center and Bronx Business Tech Incubator 2019-2020

To further promote and support its businesses, the Tech Center has been collaborating with SBDC and other agencies and local workforce to plan events, expos, workshops and conferences at no cost to the businesses and the community (see list of workshops below).

1.3 Collaboration with SCORE NY Chapter at the Bronx Business Tech Incubator

The Tech Center, SBDC and SCORE NYC, a volunteer team of experienced business mentors, are collaborating to counsel and secure funding for small businesses in the Bronx. This is an excellent opportunity to support the Bronx business community. SCORE mentors are regularly advising local clients on business planning, marketing, operations and other business skill sets. In addition, SCORE has conducted free workshops and roundtables at BBTI with more than 600 attendees in total:

- Media, entertainment
- Real estate construction
- Marketing, sales
- Technical services, engineering
- E-commerce, internet, information technology
- Importance of Cyber Security in business
- How to use Artificial Intelligent in business
- The role of Technology in Business

Due to coronavirus, SCORE workshops at BBTI are offered as online webinars. Below is the link to the April 13th workshop:

[Link to April 13, 2020 workshop](#)

Workshops 2019-2020

Date	Title	Atten.	Org.
3/11/2019	Create the Business Plan that's Right for You	43	SBDC
4/1/2019	Blogging & Email Marketing for Your Small Business	65	SCORE
5/6/2019	Essential Small Business Services	62	SCORE
6/3/2019	Create Your Own Sales Opportunities	52	SCORE
6/10/2019	ACCION Day Care Start up	11	SBDC
7/25/2019	Talk to the Bankers	16	SBDC
8/5/2019	Wholesale-Retail Boot Camp	47	SCORE
8/14/2019	Selling to the Government 7 8(a) HUBzone and WOSB Certification	15	SBDC
8/21/2019	Meet the Interns-Does your Business Need Attention?	32	SBCP
9/9/2019	The Basics Nonprofits	59	SCORE
9/25/2019	Doing Business with the Gov., MWBE Cert. and & Cyber Security	14	SBDC
10/7/2019	Starting a Restaurant Business: What Does it take?	15	SCORE
10/29/2019	Japanese Delegation	18	BBTI
11/4/2019	Creative Marketing on a Shoestring	45	SCORE
11/6/2019	The Fundamentals of Scaling Your Enterprise	9	SBDC
12/2/2019	Know How Profitable Your Business is, and Why?	34	SCORE
1/6/2020	Your Digital Media Strategy: Tools and Tips	49	SBDC
1/28/2020	MWBE Certification Selling to the Government	12	NYWCC
2/3/2020	Questions You Need to Answer Before Starting a Business	27	SCORE
2/4/2020	Marketing & Creating Your Capability Statement	24	SBDC
2/25/2020	Are you an Entrepreneur? Build a Website For Your Small Business	22	SBDC
N/A	BBTI open houses, 2/ month	84	BBTI
	Total	755	

1.4 New Initiative: Establishment of the Bronx Business Council through Bronx Business Tech Incubator (BBTI) and the Small Business Development Center.

in August 2019, strategic alliances with other Bronx organizations were formed to drive greater visibility and foot traffic to the incubator. Local economic development partners such as the South Bronx Overall Development Corp. (SoBro), Bronx Overall Development Corp. (BOEDC), the Fordham Road Business Improvement District (Fordham BID), Women's Business Resource Center (BOC) and CUNY Bronx community colleges joined the BBTI to launch a united front campaign by sharing an online Bronx program calendar of events, to help fuel the spirit of entrepreneurship and business ownership. In particular, the goal is to avoid duplication of services and fill any gaps in needed technical assistance resources. In order to drive sustainability and value to the Bronx economy, strategic decisions were established. Bronx Business Council offerings are particularly focused on technology, finance and business.

Bronx Business Council member organizations:

- The Bronx Chamber of Commerce
- The South Bronx Overall Development Corp. [SoBro]
- Bronx Overall Development Corp. [BOEDC]
- The Fordham Road Business Improvement District
- The NYC Department of Small Business Services - Business Solutions
- Bronx Community College
- Hostos Community College
- Small Business Development Center
- Women's Business Resource Center [BOC]
- Business Outreach Center [BOCnet]
- Small Business Administration

Part of the Bronx Business Council's mission, is to establish an "Outreach Center" focusing on the "immigrant entrepreneur" as well as general business advisement. Karen Bhatia, Senior Vice President of the Economic Development Corporation joined the most recent meeting of the Bronx Business Council to learn about current developments, goals and aspirations.

Lehman's Small Business Development Center and Workforce Education were featured on Bronxnet

Clarence Stanley, Executive Director of the Small Business Development Center at the Lehman College School of Continuing & Professional Studies, and Kimberly Kendall, Director of Workforce Education join Bob Lee for a look at the Bronx Business Council, the Small Business Development center, and their many programs.

[Bronx Business Council & Small Business Development | OPEN](#)

1.5 \$100K Verizon grant to launch emerging tech mentoring program for veteran, MWBE-owned small businesses across NYC, January 26, 2020.



Photo right to left: Daniel Lemons, Lehman College President, Samira Bahrami, Director CUNY on the Concourse, Lehman College, Jane MacKillop, Dean, School of Continuing and Professional Studies, Lehman College, April Horton, Director, External Affairs & Government Affairs, Verizon, Kimberly Kendall, Director of Workforce Education Programs, Lehman College



As home to the only Augmented and Virtual Reality Lab in the Bronx, the Bronx Business Tech Incubator, is well positioned to lead training in emerging technology for small business owners and to connect owners to local Verizon technology mentors. The Verizon Community grant will support emerging technology training and mentorship for 250 small businesses in the five boroughs over the next two years. This workshop and mentorship at the Bronx Business Tech Incubator will be replicated in each borough through a partnership with Lehman's sister CUNY schools Queens College, College of Staten Island, Baruch College and New York City College of Technology. Read more:

- [\\$100,000 allocation will result in Lehman College technology mentorship program](#)
- [Exposing Veteran/MWBE Business Owners to Emerging Tech, Courtesy of Lehman](#)
- [CUNY launches tech mentoring program targeting small businesses](#)
- [View More Photos](#)

1.6 **Other Bronx Business Tech Incubator events**

- [Open Data week with the Mayor's Office and Department of Health on March 5, 2020](#)
- [City of Science at Lehman College, February, 2020. BBTI served more than 200 Bronx residents at its VR/AR booth.](#)
- [TechDay New York, Jacob K. Javits Convention Center, 7 booths are given to 7 Tech Center businesses on May, 2019.](#)
- [World Science Festival. June 2019](#)
- STEM Science and art conference, in partnership with the Department of Education on May 2019.
- Introduction to Hardware, in collaboration with the Bronx Innovation Factory.
- BBTI supported its clients to participate in [Ascent conference, New York's preeminent tech conference, where the venture community meets.](#)



2. Small Business Consulting Practice, cohorts 3 & 4)



The Small Business Consulting Practice program (SBCP) is a project funded by the City Council of New York involving a collaboration between the Department of Economics and Business and the School of Continuing and Professional Studies (SCPS) at Lehman College. The goal of this project is to provide business students with applied business training and experience and to supply small business with free technology and business assistance. A total of 28 students were selected for the project for the third and fourth cohorts in Summer 2019 and Fall 2019 and 34 businesses received help. The selected students committed to attend the training workshops during the 3 months over the Summer, 2019 and Spring 2020, followed by 1 month of internships with small businesses. The businesses were clients housed at the Bronx Business Tech Incubator or businesses working with the Small Business Development Center. The students, or “Junior Consultants”, as they were known, were housed in the I-lab, the Tech Incubator, under the supervision of the Bronx Business Tech Incubator business advisor and the program coordinator. This initiative, which bridges classroom learning with hands-on experience in various business functions, provides business, economics and accounting students with technological opportunities to not only develop and deepen their business acumen but the business experience gives them an edge in the job market. It provides small businesses with a free intern with expertise, energy and enthusiasm for technology and business.

Here are four examples of the impacts of engagement of SBCP interns with Bronx Small Businesses at the Bronx Business Tech Incubator:

Kyana Beckles: Current tech center client

Established: 2016

Products: Specializes in the design, validation and administration of customized employee selection programs.

Their mission: to develop psychometric employment testing that is unbiased and fair for all applicants.

SBCP Student Provided:

- Grant funding Research
- Development of partnership engagement

Sandrine Valentin

Established: 2019

Products: Bath soaps, salts and body oils made from all natural products.

Their mission: to provide people with dry, damaged skin with natural solutions.

SBCP Student Provided:

- Development of the business' cost structure.
- Development of E-commerce website
- Sandrine worked with 2 interns to set up her Cost structure and her E-commerce website on the Shoppify platform
- Students were able to complete both projects and Sandrinebeauty.com is producing revenue.

Jessica Johnson

Established: 1962

Products: Professional transport, guard, patrol and protective services

Their mission: to provide its clients with peace of mind through the safeguarding of the people and locations they secure

SBCP Student Provided:

- Payroll services
- Accounts payable reconciliation
- Bookkeeping

Branden Baskin: Current tech center client

Establish: 2015

Products: After-school digital education program k-12

SBCP Student Provided:

- Development of Engagement strategy
- Market research
- Digital Content Creation



Refer to the first 2 links for the comprehensive reports on the trainings and internships outcomes, the third bullet is linked to the students' website:

- [3rd cohort internship outcomes](#)
- [3rd and 4th cohorts training report](#)
- [Small Business Consulting Practice website](#)

3. Virtual Reality Training Academy, Unity training and NYU Partnership

The School of Continuing and Professional Studies (SCPS) at Lehman College has created an Information Technology Hub in the Bronx. The business incubators are part of Lehman's multi-year vision which now includes a Virtual Reality Training Academy and Development Lab to train the borough's growing sector of technology professionals.

SCPS is educating the content creators who will shape the future of education, training, and entertainment, through a comprehensive Unity curriculum that targets the key areas of AR and VR. To achieve that, SCPS has become an Authorized Unity Training Partner (AUTP). Unity leads the industry as an AR/VR development platform which gives developers the power to create truly immersive, cutting-edge AR and VR content.

One hundred and seventy six (176) students have been through the Unity workshops training in this reporting period and 12 students are currently enrolled in the [Virtual Reality Training Academy](#), which comprises Phase 1 and 2, both 15-week, 180-hour courses on how to create immersive media. Composed of eight modules, the course will focus on the Unity platform as the means to developing content for Augmented and Virtual Reality.

In addition to the intensive academy Unity workshops are offered twice a month. These workshops introduce participants to developing applications, whether XR or mobile, in Unity.

Students will receive a Lehman College certificate, Lehman College badge and access to the Tech Incubator. Read more:

[Lehman College remains the only CUNY to house the Virtual Reality Academy](#)



SCPS is expanding Lehman College's existing VR/AR Training Academy to develop the local workforce with short-term training and increase familiarity with the possibilities of VR/AR among local entrepreneurs and the community, in particular disconnected youth. To this end, SCPS has expanded its technology resources by hiring an AR/VR instructor, and partnering with The Knowledge House, a Bronx-based technology workforce development community-based organization, to partner with NYU and to create the NYC Virtual and Augmented Reality Center (RLAB). The Council funding allowed SCPS to leverage the 3-year grant (\$200,000/year) from the Economic Development Corporation of NYC to serve over 2,000 community residents per year as part of the NYU [RLAB](#) grant. The program has served 3,234 community residents to date (Sep 2018-current).

Celebrating the 1-year anniversary of RLab, and our partnership to support emerging tech in NYC.

<https://medium.com/@therlabnyc/rlab-turns-one-dd846afa9858>



April 2019- January 2020			
	Programs	# people	Category
1	Small business demonstration at local expos	308	(1) New Ventures
2	Small business networking	68	(1) New Ventures
3	Small business short course (6 hrs), 4	176	(3) Education & Opportunity
4	Small business course (12 hrs), 2		(3) Education & Opportunity
5	VR training Short course (12 hours), 6		(3) Education & Opportunity
6	VR Meetups	407	(3) Education & Opportunity
7	General public -- Open houses/info sessions	218	(4) Community Outreach
8	Tech and business Demonstrations	115	(4) Community Outreach
9	Short tech and business course	811	(4) Community Outreach
	Total	2103	

4. Technology infrastructure Upgrade and Scholarships.

Technology upgrades and Scholarships have been planned at CUNY on the Concourse (COTC) to fully support, enhance, and further the mission and initiatives of the Lehman College and the Tech Center. The technology upgrades and Scholarships include:

- Scholarships to Lehman majors and the Bronx community, e.g. Unity training and industry certification to CIS and CS majors.
- Upgrade COTC server operating systems
- COTC sign-in terminals, visitor management software
- COTC security camera system
- COTC projector, smart screen upgrade

5. Economic Modeling Specialists Intl. (Emsi) licenses, business analytics management.

Economic Modeling Specialists Intl. ([Emsi](#)) provides industry-leading employment data and economic analysis via web tools and custom reports. Emsi has produced more than 1,200 comprehensive impact analyses for colleges and universities in the US and internationally, the web tools are used by thousands of professionals in higher education, workforce and economic development, and the private sector.

Emsi's mission in higher education is to connect students, education, and work by providing data and analytics that help colleges and universities make smarter decisions and create successful strategies. The City Council funding enabled SCPS to purchase 10 one-year licenses (subscriptions) to Emsi's Analyst and Go Recruit data analytics platform.

6. Overall impact and Budget (Fiscal 2020)

Programs		Impact	Overall individual impact	Budget	In-kind	
1	Business Incubation	Business support	18 BBTI clients	\$231,500.00	\$206,200.00	
			464 SBDC clients			
	Workshops	755	1,237			
	Bronx Business Council	Bronx Borough				
	Verizon grant	Impact will be reported in FY 2021				
2	Small Business Consulting Practice, cohorts 3, 4		28 Students	62	\$105,974.80	
			34 Businesses			
3	Virtual Reality Training Academy		2,115	2,115	–	\$200,000.00
4	Technology upgrade, scholarships/ subsidies and OTPS		–	–	\$92,525.20	–
5	Emsi licenses, business analytics management		Lehman College and CUNY on the Concourse	–	\$20,000.00	–
Total				3,414	\$450,000.00	\$462,200.00