

Bronx Business Tech Center Incubator Report to the City Council for the period April through December 2022



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Impact

Next Steps

Introduction

Lehman College School of Continuing and Professional Studies (SCPS) is pleased to submit this report on the outcomes of the FY22 Council Funds to Create New Tech Incubators, for the period April 2022 through December 2022.

In August 2020, CUNY on the Concourse (COTC) was the first Lehman facility opened for in-person classes after lockdown began on March 13, 2020. In preparation for the re-opening in early summer, 2020, when there was no approved re-opening policy and safety plan put in place by CUNY central office, COTC team developed a comprehensive safety plan to enable the essential healthcare skills classes to operate partially in person in early fall. This was essential so that students could finish their training, which required hands-on classes. The entire facility, including classrooms and labs, had to be re-designed and reconfigured to accommodate social distancing and CDC guidelines. The safety plan included constructing protection shields and designing and installing signs on the floor and walls. Disinfectant supplies and adequate PPT all had to be purchased. This was a huge undertaking since no one had ever before had to deal with a pandemic at a time when no one was vaccinated. In August 2020, CUNY central office approved the COTC plan, which met and exceeded the CUNY Guidelines, which were under development at that time. In addition to changes to the physical plant and operations, this partial reopening required COTC staff to learn how to manage COVID vaccine software, Cleared4, for non-credit students and the public to access COTC.

Starting August-September 2020, COTC opened two days per week for limited in-person allied health classes only (Certified Nursing Assistant, medical assistant, pharmacy tech and dental assistant) and CNA testing. As the city re-opened in Spring 2021, COTC opened one other day to accommodate more in-person classes. In fall, 2021, COTC's testing center opened, offering CLEP tests to the community and Lehman College degree students.

The Bronx Business Tech Center at CUNY on the Concourse has supported economic development in the Bronx, in general, and particularly its Tech Incubator clients in a variety of innovative ways since the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown began in March 2020. The Tech Center supported the twenty-six businesses in the Tech Center Incubator, and six new businesses in 2022, through remote services (telephone, email, or video conference) and in person from April 2022 to the present.

As the Bronx recovers from the Covid-19 lockdown, CUNY on the Concourse is now open three days per week for Tech Center businesses and in-person allied health classes (Certified Nursing Assistant, medical assistant, pharmacy tech and dental assistant), some digital training programs, and testing for CLEP, GED and Certified Nursing Assistant exams.

City Council funding for the Bronx Business Tech Center has enabled us to create a hub, which in turn has attracted multiple sources of grant funding which have multiplied the impact of the City Council allocation. The outcomes of the grant-funded programs are included in the report as an integral part of the overall impact of the Tech Center.

The Tech Center is a hub of business and training and is therefore an obvious locus for the expansion of the emerging cannabis sector. A grant from the Dept. of Labor to Borough of Manhattan Community College and Lehman College to provide business support and training means that the Tech center will also house the CUARD licensees as they acquire permits to open dispensaries and other businesses such as delivery. The technology innovation in this industry is well suited to the location.

1. The Tech Center Supported 26 businesses in the Tech Center Incubator.

[The Bronx Business Tech Incubator \(BBTI\)](#) has been open for in-person access since April 2022. BBTI's current and new members have not been charged a membership fee for using the facilities and services at CUNY on the Concourse. This opportunity is made possible through generous funding by NY City Council. BBTI Members receive business support from Small Business Development Center (SBDC) business advisors. They are also invited to business workshops, sponsored by SBDC, and other economic development agencies. Weekly incubator newsletters are shared with the members to provide up-to-date information about programs, services, workshops, grants, and procurement opportunities. These are sent to over 40,000 community residents.

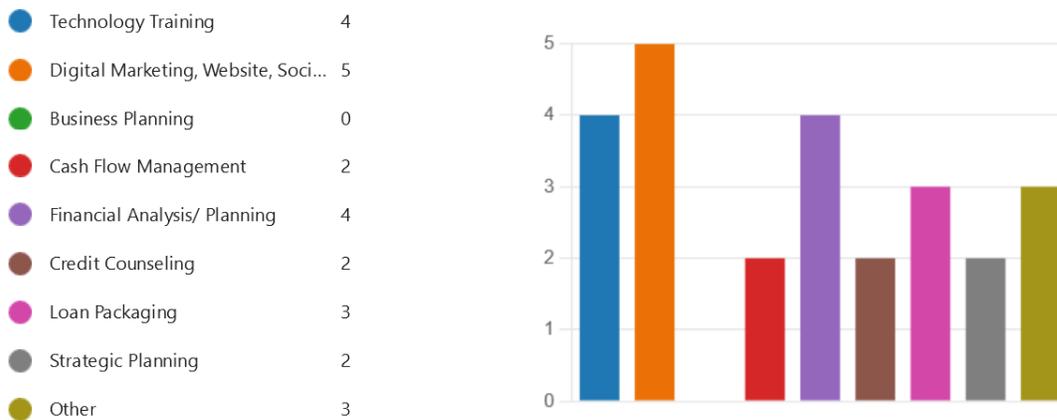
Incubator Client Interview Findings

Overall, the Incubator clients are thriving. We were able to interview 13/ 26 businesses in December 2022 (50%). The majority reported varying degrees of success, as a result of dynamic pivoting and in some cases, businesses have expanded and are hiring part-time consultants to fulfill the demand for their services. In answer to the question "How would you describe your current business

Obed Fulcar of Sherman Creek Conservancy Inc. shared with us that Algenis Martinez, a team member responsible for tech Initiatives/ application development has opened his own tech company named AMartinez Technologies LLC. Obed said, *“This would have not happened without the awesome support and opportunities provided by the Lehman Bronx Tech Incubator program.”* Algenis Martinez started his business during his senior year at Isla High School, located at Walton HS Campus, in the Bronx.

A common need reported amongst the incubator clients is the necessity for funding for business advertisement, such as assistance in digital marketing, social media, website, and SEOs. The second need was for financial planning and technology training. Some businesses are looking for more support in loan packaging and financial services.

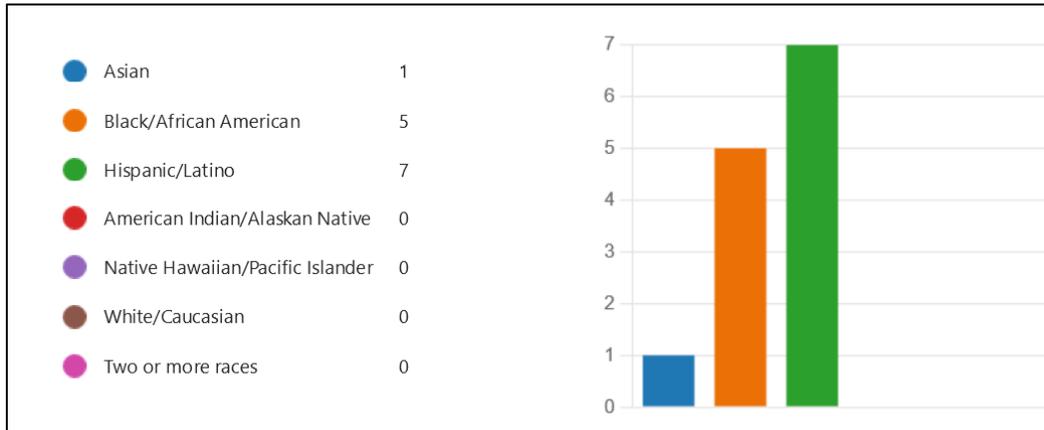
What services are you interested in receiving?



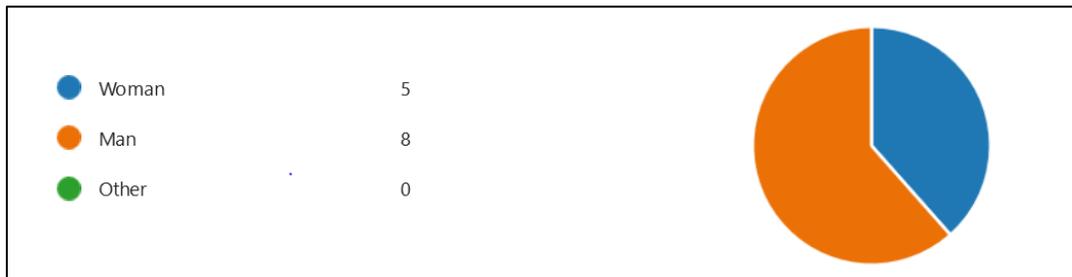
The Incubator continues to provide essential support to non-profits such as the Worldwide Veterans and Family Services Program, Inc., a social service agency in the Bronx, New York serving the needs of Veterans and their families at risk of being homeless. WW Veterans and Family Services Program has expanded and opened a foundation in Dominican Republic.

The largest number (about 50%) of Tech Center clients are Hispanic/Latino followed by Black/African American members.

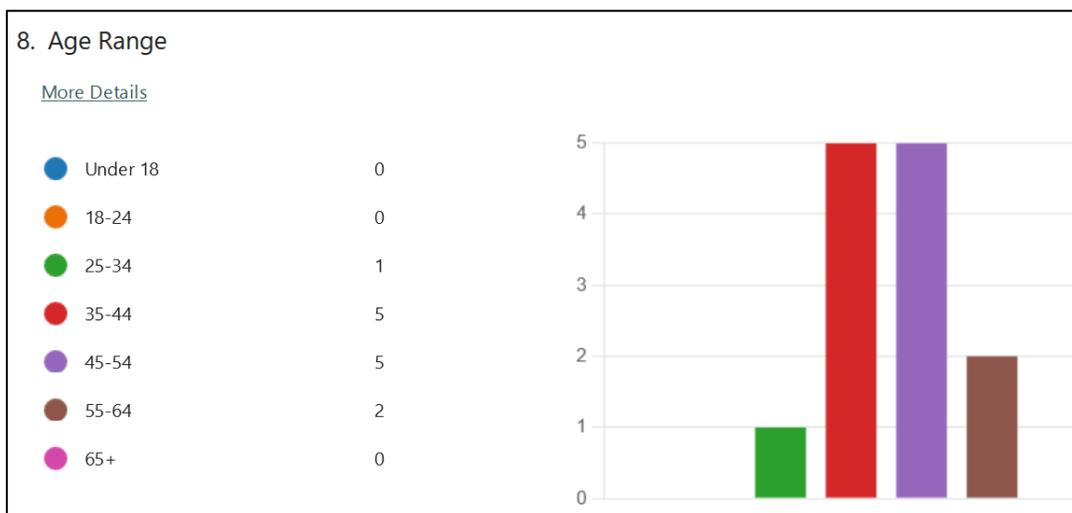
Ethnicity



Gender

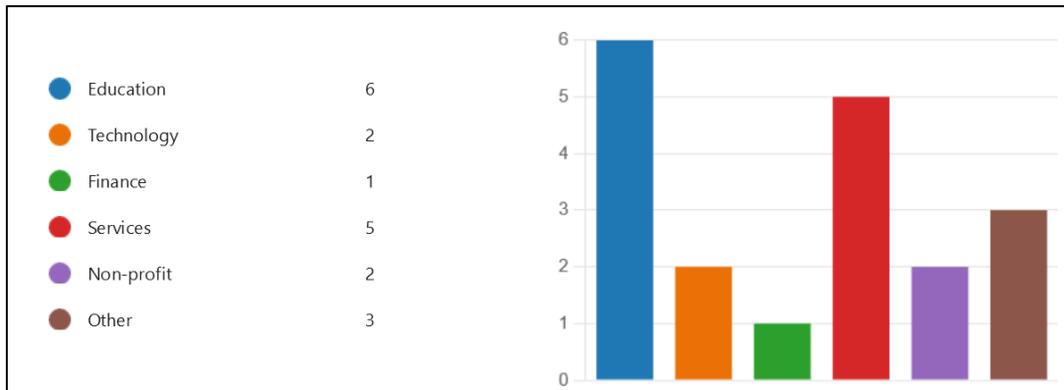


Age



More than 50% of BBTI members are in the Education field followed by Services including advertising and food services.

Business type:



2. Small business profiles



Broadway Housing Communities, Non-profit Settlement House. Alumni of Custom Courses at SCPC, CUNY on the Concourse.

1. PARTNERED with Lehman staff to customize courses to meet their training needs
2. ENROLLED 16 staff in a customized Google Workspace course
3. EMPOWERED team with professional development and hands-on learning
4. ACHIEVED their goal of protecting sensitive information and documentation

Broadway Housing Communities is a Bronx- based non-profit providing tenant services. A major challenge for Broadway Housing was to find a way to secure the sensitive tenant data required to receive rent subsidies from city and state agencies. Lehman College staff worked with their team to train 16 employees on the Google Workspace, including Google for Professionals and Google Forms to meet their goals of secure, digital, and functional for departmental collaboration across platforms.

<https://www.broadwayhousing.org/>

Meldis Jimnez, Community Organizer from Broadway Housing Communities said, *“Services like this are greatly needed in our communities. There are businesses on many different levels, not just small ones, but that’s where the greatest need is, who are still trying to figure out how to provide the best customer service and improve their work efficiency. Digital group training like this is convenient and helpful for creating efficiency in the community, which improves services and creates a larger*

impact on the people we serve. As a human service worker, programs like this are useful for us. “

Marlene Valdez, Administrative Coordinator from Broadway Housing Communities said, *“Professor Leslie was magnificent. She was very detailed and took her time with our group. She provided an informational website that we can continue to review. She taught me that even though we can take shortcuts, it’s also good to retrace our steps and take the long way once in a while. I learned how to define my work into detail to better understand the tasks that need to be completed.”*

[Bronx Business Tech Incubator periodic report- November 2022](#)

3. AR/VR Unity Training

Unity is the state-of-the-art software to design and develop Virtual Reality (VR) applications and contents. Students learn to create prototypes and create VR projects/ contents from start to finish, beginning with a blank design document and ending with a fully functional project. Unity course will help students bring ideas to life in VR. This certification helps the future game developers to showcase their mastery of core Unity skills and concepts to obtain their first professional Unity role.

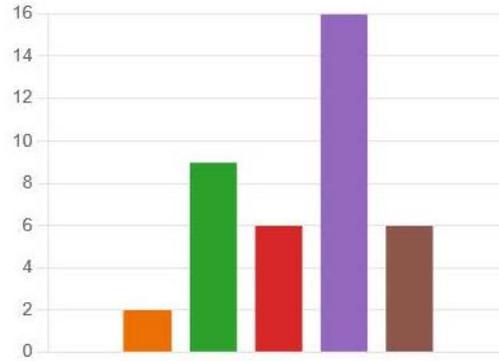
Unity training is subsidized by the City Council funding. In collaboration with the Unity Technologies administration in the UK, several Unity courses, both an introductory course and preparing for the Unity Certified Game Developer certificate, have been offered remotely using Zoom. These courses are intended to meet the continuing demand in the Bronx for AR/VR training and certification. Unity training is planned to start in-person, at CUNY on the Concourse Hyflex VR lab, in summer 2023.

| Course | Dates | Enrollment |
|--|----------------------|------------|
| Unity Certified Associate (22SPVRT302) | 05/10/22 to 06/09/22 | 11 |
| Unity Certified Associate (22SPVRT302) | 07/05/22 to 08/16/22 | 14 |
| Unity Certified Associate (22SPVRT302) | 11/01/22 to 11/29/22 | 15 |
| Total | | 40 |

Student statistics and demographic information, education, sector, purpose.

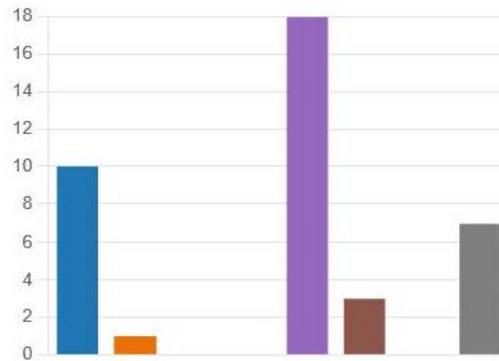
Education

| | |
|--|----|
| ● No high school diploma | 0 |
| ● High school diploma | 2 |
| ● Some college, no degree | 9 |
| ● Associate's degree | 6 |
| ● Bachelor's degree | 16 |
| ● Master's degree | 6 |
| ● Doctoral degree | 0 |



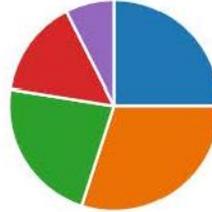
Sector

| | |
|--|----|
| ● Education | 10 |
| ● Finance | 1 |
| ● Non-profit | 0 |
| ● Social Services | 0 |
| ● Technology | 18 |
| ● Health | 3 |
| ● None | 0 |
| ● Other | 7 |



What's your purpose in learning Unity (VR/AR content creation platform)?

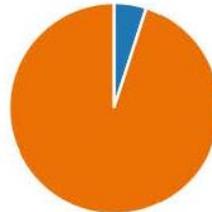
| | |
|--------------------------------------|----|
| ● Job prospects | 10 |
| ● Increase opportunities | 12 |
| ● Become a Unity Certified Associ... | 9 |
| ● Game creation | 6 |
| ● Other | 3 |



This program is funded by the New York City Council with the expectation that the participants agree to the time commitment (attendance of 80% or above). Upon successful completion of the program, participants will receive a Lehman certificate and a digital badge. If you are not able to fulfill the attendance requirements, or the course is not a good match for you, please choose the 1st bullet point so that your seat can be given to a wait-listed student.

Please confirm your participation status:

| | |
|--------------------------------------|----|
| ● I will drop out | 2 |
| ● I will agree to the time commit... | 38 |
| ● Other | 0 |



4. The Testing Center expansion for Computer-based GED and Pearson VUE.

CUNY on the Concourse test center administers computer-based Pearson Vue tests, including the computer-based GED test, and The College Board's College-Level Examination Program (CLEP).

This year New York State selected the General Educational Development Test (GED® Test) as the primary pathway to a New York State High School Equivalency (HSE) Diploma. The GED Test includes four sections:

- Reasoning Through Language Arts (RLA)
- Mathematical Reasoning
- Science
- Social Studies

Pearson VUE provides computer-based testing for information technology, academic, GED, government and other testing programs empowering professionals

in these industries through certifications. The computer-based GED test is a secure, reliable, and valid instrument that is used to verify that candidates have knowledge in core content areas equivalent to that of graduating high school.

CUNY on the Concourse test center capacity is 10 candidates at a time. The tech center team is implementing a plan to double the testing center capacity by the beginning of Spring 2023. This means we will be able to test 40 candidates per/week. This is an important community service benefiting the Bronx and the surrounding communities.

5. IT Manager at the Tech Center and CUNY on the Concourse.

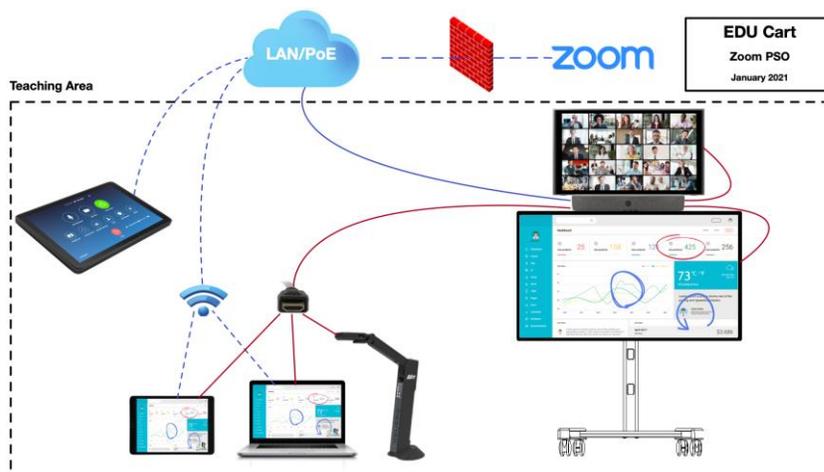
Tech center has hired a dedicated tech manager to support the center technologies and the tech center clients. Dwayne Mack has a bachelor's degree in computer science and graduated from Lehman College in May 2022 having graduated from high school with honors in June 2018.

His experience working at Lehman College ITR enables Dwayne to bring the expertise needed to the tech center, including but not limited to:

- Cisco APs/ Cisco office phones/ Windows Desktops
- Patching network connections
- Windows/MAC Desktop network troubleshooting/configuration
- Software Configuration
- Tech support for tech center businesses

He is Proficient in MS Office, Windows 7, 8, 10 and many other tools and software.

6. Updating technology equipment including HyFlex classrooms at CUNY on the Concourse.



The Tech Center has an IT agenda that focuses on accelerating digital investments in response to growing business needs, using new data to improve business operations, increasing technology capabilities to overcome pandemic restrictions, and increasing the abilities of businesses to grow.

We are pleased to announce that as of fall 2022, the Bronx Business Tech Incubator has been converted into a HyFlex space along with several classrooms and labs such as; the A+ lab, Cisco Lab, AR/VR lab, two CNA labs, a Pharmacy Tech lab, a Medical Assistant and regular classrooms at COTC, for a total of 11 rooms. A HyFlex course/workshop gives students and businesses the ability to choose to attend the sessions either face-to-face or online (e.g., synchronous).

The equipment installed includes:

- HD cameras with optional pan, tilt, and zoom options
- Microphones to capture the instructor and student voice
- Touch screen monitor with pen tool on the side of the monitor
- Document camera (that can also be used as a camera input)
- Updated podium control panel

7. Bronx Business Council and Tech Center newsletter.

The Tech Center continued to provide economic development agency leadership through the Bronx Business Council (BBC). The following organizations are members of the Council:

| Bronx Business Council Partner Organizations |
|---|
| BOC, Business Outreach Center Network |
| Bronx Women's Business Resource Center |
| BOEDC, Bronx Overall Development Corp. |
| Bronx Chamber of Commerce |
| Fordham Road Business Improvement District BID |
| NYC Business Solutions |
| SoBro, South Bronx Overall Development Corp. |
| SoBro, Industrial Development Zone |
| Hostos Community College |
| Bronx Community College |
| Workforce Education Program, Lehman College |
| School of Continuing and Professional Studies, Lehman College |
| Small Business Development Center, Lehman College |
| CUNY on the Concourse Campus, Lehman College |

Meetings of the Bronx Business Council were convened on 6/30/2022 and 10/25/2022, to share information and good practices and ensure that there are no gaps in services or unnecessary duplication. Partners have been working closely with businesses by connecting them to procurement and funding opportunities. All partners reported that they have been helping small businesses across the borough with several relief options to help businesses and nonprofits organizations.

The Tech Center continues to send the BBTI weekly online newsletter to 40,000 Bronx businesses on our mailing list to keep them informed about new grant and loan funding as it becomes available as well as training opportunities. This has been

a source of critical information as the Bronx weathered the lockdown and prepared for economic recovery and is a source of much needed updates.

[BBTI newsletter data, April- December 2022](#)

[Newsletter analytics](#)

8. Xenegrade: Bronx Business Tech Incubator new registration management application.

[XenDirect](#) is the maker of Xenegrade, which is a leading registration management application built for continuing education, workforce development, contract training, adult education, and similar educational programs. The School of Continuing and Professional Studies' Workforce Program, Adult Degree Program and the Bronx Business Tech Incubator are utilizing the new registration software solution to better track data, courses, foot traffic, and workshop registrations. This technology also creates surveys, reports, and evaluations. The integration of the software and training is on-going and full transition to the new system is expected in summer 2023.

Grant-funded Programs:

1. The Small Business Development Center (SBDC) at Lehman College

The SBDC at Lehman College School of Continuing and Professional Studies continued to collaborate closely with the Tech Center to support the local small businesses. The mission of the SBDC is to support the businesses so that they can stay open, recover from the difficult times and grow.

The SBDC supported the Tech Center clients with advice on business financing, government contracting, e-commerce/social media, grants and more (e.g., PPP, Shuttered Venues funding, etc.). They provided free business consulting, information about licensing, permit guidance, and the SBA Coronavirus Economic Injury Disaster Loan.

<https://www.nysbdc.org/centers/centers.aspx?centid=52>

For this year, May 01- December 13, 2022, the Bronx SBDC at Lehman College:

1. Provided one-on-one counseling to 417 new clients.
2. Had economic impact of \$4,487,703.09
3. Served clients with the following demographic breakdown - 57% Black - 36% Hispanic 15% White. Note that 53% of clients counseled were women.
4. Conducted 27 training events with 623 participants.

Vanessa Joseph, branch manager at TD Bank and Vice President of Mt. Vernon Chamber of Commerce, joined SCPS and the Tech Center in October 2022 as the Regional Director of the Bronx Small Business Development Center.

SBDC trainings and events, May 01- December 13, 2022

| Date | Title | Atten |
|--------------|--|------------|
| 5/26/2022 | Is Owning a Business a Good fit for You? | 9 |
| 6/01/2022 | Navigating The Red Tape | 23 |
| 6/09/2022 | Banking Services | 56 |
| 6/23/2022 | Strong Business Credit | 46 |
| 6/28/2022 | Access To Real Estate Lending! 504 Loan Program | 41 |
| 7/06/2022 | Improving Business Productivity: Technology & Cyber Security | 26 |
| 7/12/2022 | Navigating Your Business Cashflow | 20 |
| 8/03/2022 | Tips & Tricks Boost Your social media | 24 |
| 8/11/2022 | Managing Cash Flow | 14 |
| 8/24/2022 | NYPL Webinar | 15 |
| 8/25/2022 | Organizational Types | 13 |
| 9/06/2022 | Throgs Neck Merchant Association | 12 |
| 9/06/2022 | BID Community Heath Day | 10 |
| 9/07/2022 | BID Fights Up Zoning | 16 |
| 9/08/2022 | Recordkeeping | 27 |
| 9/13/2022 | FIN TECH- Small Business Need Big Solutions | 30 |
| 9/22/2022 | Risk Management | 23 |
| 9/27/2022 | Financing Your Small Business | 24 |
| 10/06/2022 | Risk Management | 13 |
| 10/11/2022 | FIN Tech Finance | 31 |
| 10/20/2022 | Selling Your Business & Succession Planning | 26 |
| 10/27/2022 | Networking Opportunity | 7 |
| 11/02/2022 | Get Business Money: No Red Tape | 56 |
| 11/10/2022 | Tax Planning & Reporting | 9 |
| 11/17/2022 | Business Booster Network | 11 |
| 12/01/2022 | Time Management with Ponce Bank | 19 |
| 12/01/2022 | M/WBE Borough Forum/ Exhibitor | 22 |
| Total | | 623 |

2. Small Business Internship Program

<https://lehman.edu/techincubator/internship.php>



The Small Business Internship Program (SBIP), formerly the Small Business Consulting Practice program (SBCP), is a project funded by the City Council of New York involving a partnership between the newly created School of Business, the School of Continuing and Professional Studies (SCPS), the Bronx Tech Center and the Small Business Development Center (SBDC). The goal of this project is to create a virtuous circle by providing Lehman business students with applied business training and experiential learning while at the same time supplying Bronx-based small businesses with needed support and resources in the form of student interns. The program was revamped and relaunched in Summer/Fall 2022 after a pause due to COVID19.

A total of 13 students were selected for the program relaunch and 7 SBDC/ Tech Center businesses received internship help. In the summer of 2022, the selected cohort attended a month of professional development training modules, LinkedIn training, Match Day, and meetings with the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) to prepare them for their internships and grow their skills, followed by a 7-week internship at a small business in the fall. The participating businesses came to the program from various channels such as: recruitment events (info sessions),

personal recommendations, and the close relationships with the Small Business Development Center. The training took place online via zoom in a live classroom environment. The SBIP faculty created a curriculum that was engaging and hands-on to help students experience content, not just learn the theory behind it. The Program Manager worked with each business to define goals, milestones, and processes to keep the business and student in sync. Overall, this initiative, which bridges classroom learning with hands-on experiential learning, provides Lehman College undergraduates with valuable experience, increasing their self-confidence, giving them an edge in the job market and providing a head-start on their professional endeavors.



It's important to note that due to the continuing COVID-19 pandemic businesses hosted internships in various modes (online, hybrid, in-person) and worked directly with the school and students to make arrangements that were comfortable and safe for all involved. Technologies such as Zoom, Slack, Gchat, Google Classrooms, GDrive, and others were used by these businesses. For more details, please see.

[Final SBIP Cohort 1 Report 12.14.22](#)

3. Digital skills training for small business employees (NYC Means Business: Training Your Employees) final report

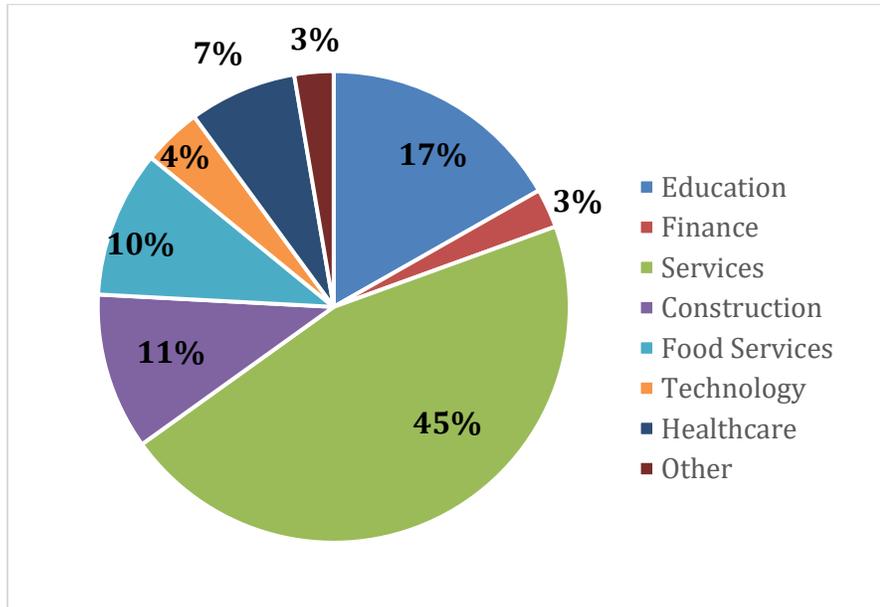
NY Means Business offered critical digital skills and safety training, as well as consultation services, to NYC small business owners and their employees. Lehman SCPS was able to provide a team of experienced staff from multiple departments who were experts in small business services, program development, online training design and delivery and client services. The leveraging of existing staff and resources allowed Lehman to scale quickly and be responsive to the changing NYC small business ecosystem during and post-pandemic lockdown.

Between January 2021 and June 2022 NY Means Business served 149 NYC small business owners and their 348 employees.

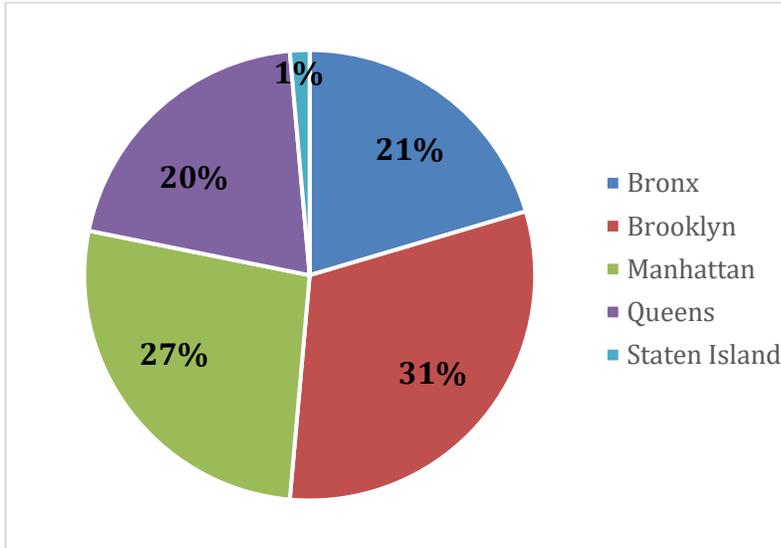
| | |
|--|------------|
| Total # of eligible businesses referred to Lehman College | 204 |
| Total # of Business – participated and consulted | 149 |
| Total # of Business - no response provided | 16 |
| Total # of Business – withdrew | 39 |

Demographics (149 participating businesses)

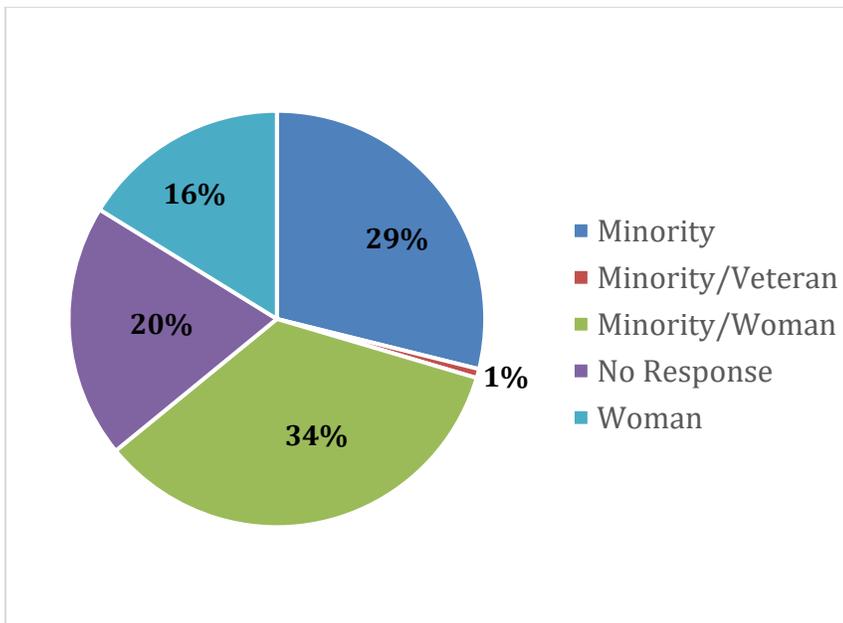
| Industry | 149 | % |
|-----------------|------------|----------|
| Education | 25 | 17% |
| Finance | 4 | 3% |
| Services | 68 | 46% |
| Construction | 16 | 11% |
| Food Services | 15 | 10% |
| Technology | 6 | 4% |
| Healthcare | 11 | 7% |
| Other | 4 | 3% |



| Borough | 142 |
|---------------|-----|
| Bronx | 29 |
| Brooklyn | 44 |
| Manhattan | 38 |
| Queens | 29 |
| Staten Island | 2 |

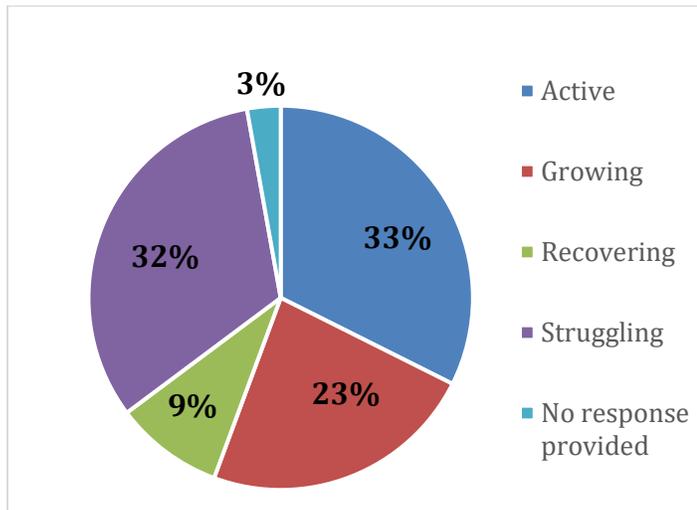


| MWBE * | Count |
|------------------|-------|
| Minority | 41 |
| Minority/Veteran | 1 |
| Minority/Woman | 49 |
| No Response | 28 |
| Woman | 23 |



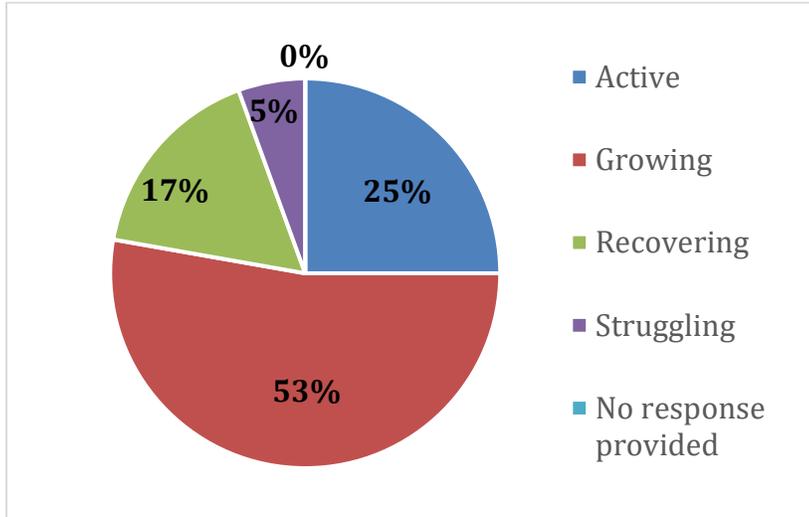
| Business Status at beginning | 142 |
|-------------------------------------|------------|
|-------------------------------------|------------|

| | |
|----------------------|----|
| Active | 46 |
| Growing | 33 |
| Recovering | 13 |
| Struggling | 46 |
| No response provided | 4 |



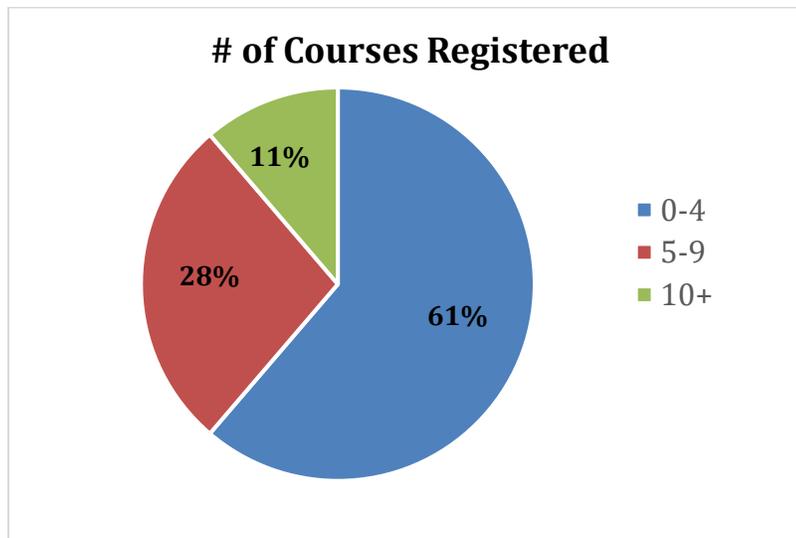
| Final consultation: Business Status | 36 |
|--|-----------|
|--|-----------|

| | |
|----------------------|----|
| Active | 9 |
| Growing | 19 |
| Recovering | 6 |
| Struggling | 2 |
| No response provided | 0 |



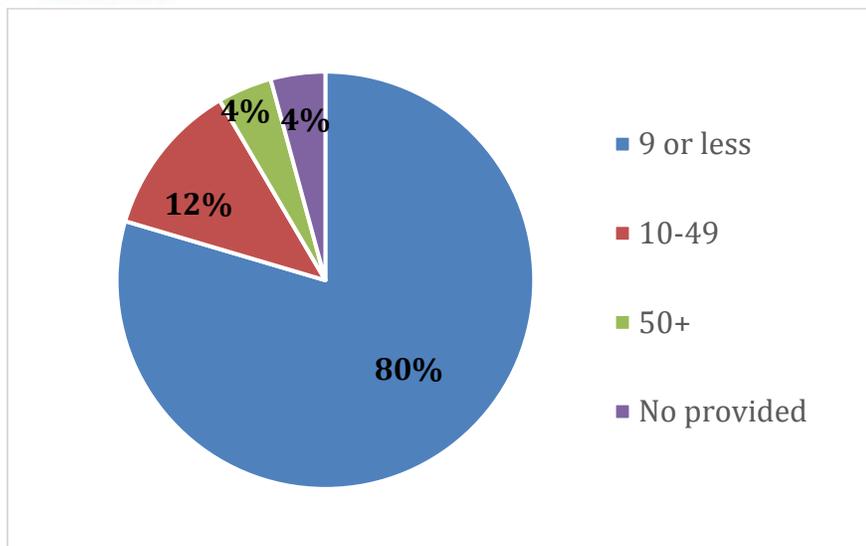
Of Courses Registered 142

| | |
|-----|----|
| 0-4 | 87 |
| 5-9 | 39 |
| 10+ | 16 |



Employee Size* 142

| | |
|--------------|-----|
| 9 or less | 113 |
| 10-49 | 17 |
| 50+ | 6 |
| Not provided | 6 |



The number of participants enrolled in training through the 149 participating businesses was 348. The participating employees registered for a total of 836 individual trainings. Out of the 836 trainings, 641 were recorded as “Successfully Complete” <75% attendance for the class, or 77%. This meets the goal set by the RFP of 75% overall attendance for the training.

| | |
|--|------------|
| Total # of participating trainees | 348 |
| Completed | 334 |
| Withdrawn during the training | 14 |

| Attendance report | Actual |
|--|---------------|
| # of successfully completed trainings by a trainee | 641 |
| # of unsuccessfully completed trainings by a trainee | 195 |
| Total # of trainings completed (excluding withdrawn courses) | 836 |

% Of trainee attending at least 75% of the sessions of one course = 77%

[Link to “Digital skills training for small business employees” final report](#)

Enrollment data by course:

| Courses | Enrollment # 892 |
|--|-------------------------|
| Microsoft Excel 365: Part 1 | 94 |
| Communication: Google Meet and Gmail | 83 |
| Shared Cloud Storage: Google Drive | 67 |
| Building an Online Presence | 66 |
| Finding New Customers Online | 63 |
| QuickBooks | 62 |
| Document Creation: Google Docs, Sheets, Slides | 61 |
| Data Collection, Surveys and Analysis: Google Forms | 59 |
| Introduction to Microsoft Teams | 53 |
| Create Your Own Website / Selling Your Product Online - BOC | 36 |
| Microsoft Excel 365: Part 2 | 31 |
| Cloud Storage: Dropbox and Microsoft OneDrive | 27 |
| Scheduling and Managing Zoom Meetings (for Hosts) | 23 |
| Microsoft Word 365: Part 1 | 22 |
| Microsoft Outlook 365: Part 2 | 21 |
| Zoom Essentials | 19 |
| Microsoft Outlook 365: Part 1 | 16 |
| Spanish - Shared Cloud Storage: Google Drive | 10 |
| Spanish - Document Creation: Google Docs, Sheets, Slides | 10 |
| Education: Google Classroom | 10 |
| Spanish - Communication: Google Meet and Gmail | 9 |
| Spanish - Data Collection, Surveys and Analysis: Google Forms | 9 |
| Computer Basics (Computer Essentials) | 9 |
| Microsoft PowerPoint 365 | 8 |
| Microsoft Office 365 Basics | 7 |
| Payroll Fundamentals (Digital Payroll Using QuickBooks for Small Business) | 7 |
| Health and hygiene in a pandemic | 5 |
| Microsoft Word 365: Part 2 | 5 |
| Mandarin - Communication: Google Meet and Gmail | 0 |
| Spanish - Zoom Essentials | 0 |
| Spanish - Scheduling and Managing Zoom Meetings | 0 |
| COVID safety for retail | 0 |
| Mac Basics | 0 |
| Microsoft Access- Desktop (NOT OFFERED) | 0 |
| Mandarin - Shared Cloud Storage: Google Drive | 0 |
| Mandarin - Document Creation: Google Docs, Sheets, Slides | 0 |
| Mandarin - Data Collection, Surveys and Analysis: Google Forms | 0 |
| COVID safety for food and beverage businesses | 0 |
| Mandarin - Zoom Essentials | 0 |

4. Cannabis Workforce and Business Development Training Program

Lehman College SCPC, in partnership with Borough of Manhattan Community College (BMCC), has received funding from New York State Department of Labor to support a Cannabis Workforce and Business Development Program at COTC's Tech Center, training individuals, entrepreneurs, and others to start up and manage small businesses in this new sector. The New York State Department of Labor anticipates 30,000-60,000 new jobs in the cannabis industry will be created in the next few years. Potential entrepreneurs and small businesses will have access to the Tech Center advisors and interns, getting support on managing a small business and its technology needs. SCPS has hired a dedicated case manager and is hiring a full-time business adviser to oversee the program operations.

Information sessions and business training on how to manage your own small business will be held at the Tech Center at CUNY on the Concourse in collaboration with technology experts, including but not limited to the below organizations:

LeafLink: Wholesale Platform connects 8,400+ retailers with 3,700+ brands and distributors for streamlined cannabis commerce.

Dutchie: an all-in-one technology platform powering the cannabis industry with Point of Sale, Ecommerce, Payments, and Insurance. Helping cannabis businesses access software that simplifies their operations.

Lucid Green: Building a standard for trust and transparency in the cannabis ecosystem. Lucid Green's platform provides retailers and distributors a complete touchless inventory management solution.

The Peak Beyond: In-store, digital shopping stations and interactive retail displays connect with an at home and mobile e-commerce platform, powering a seamless customer experience, increased loyalty, and more sales.

5. NCLEX, ESOL bridge to immigrant nursing program for English language learner

This program is 100% free for immigrant nurses, funded by NYC SBS. The program goals include:

- Improve English language skills
- Learn about nursing in the US healthcare system
- Prepare for the NCLEX-RN exam to become re-licensed in NY State
- Job placement upon obtaining NYS RN licensure

All applicants must meet the following requirements:

- Have a nursing equivalent degree from a country outside of the US
- Read at an intermediate-to-advanced level in English
- Be an English language learner
- Have the authorization to work in the US
- Be a full-time resident of New York City
- Have the authorization to test for the NCLEX-RN exam or have recently applied to NYSED and CGFNS
- Be fully vaccinated for COVID-19
- If employed, earn less than \$40,000 a year

Students from the first cohort will take the NCLEX test in January 2023 and will be graduated from the program. Second cohort recruitment is on-going.

1. [nyc.gov/healthcaretraining](https://www.nyc.gov/healthcaretraining)
2. <https://www.lehman.edu/academics/continuing-education/learn-more/Internationally-Trained-NursesNCLEX/>



“This program is the best part of my life, it has not only helped me carefully prepare for the NCLEX exam, but it has also helped me so much with my English speaking and understanding. I have gained so much knowledge. I love this program and all that it has to offer. I no longer feel so nervous about taking the NCLEX exam because I feel

*like I have received great support in all areas.” - Jyoti Pandey, NCLEX Participant
Immigrant Nursing Program for English Language Learners.*

[Internationally Trained Nurse \(NCLEX\) flyer](#)

6. Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) for English language learners

The ESOL Bridge full-time day program for speakers of other languages is dedicated to improving the English skills needed to qualify for the Nursing (NCLEX-RN) program. Lehman College Adult Learning Center (ALC) and SCPS/ CUNY on the Concourse have partnered to offer this NYSED-approved CNA training program for non-native English speakers who are seeking employment in hospitals, nursing homes. This program is offered at no cost to students earning less than \$63,928 / year and will be offered at COTC in Spring 2022.

[CERTIFIED NURSING ASSISTANT \(CNA\) flyer](#)

7. Upskilling Short Courses and Blackstone LaunchPad entrepreneurship program.

Thanks to the City Council funding, the Tech Center was able to support the Upskilling Initiative and the Blackstone LaunchPad, by providing resources and staff to collaborate with Lehman’s Computer Science Department this spring, allowing students and the community to take their skills to the next level.

This valuable program has provided free eight to ten-week Upskilling courses for small business owners, the community, Lehman College students, and alumni. The program prepares individuals for open positions in high industry growth areas such as IT, Data Analytics, Healthcare, Business Administration, Human Resources, and Cyber Security. The initiative added Project Management and Construction to the fall semester. Upskilling covers up to 100% of tuition for course(s) applied for and approved.

All Lehman College undergraduate students are eligible to take these one-credit courses.

<http://www.lehmanupskilling.org/>

Program outcomes: Upskilling Data

The fall courses finished in December 2022

- From spring to fall 2022 (318) there was a 10% increase.
- 72% of attendees were women, a 2% increase from spring 2022
- 25% of applicants are unemployed, a 4% decrease from spring 2022
- 20% small business owners, a 4% decrease from spring 2022
- 75% held a college or professional degree, a 5% decrease from spring 2022
- 47% Lehman College students, a 20% increase from spring 2022
- 53% community attendees, a 20% decrease from spring 2022

This Fall Upskilling ran once within the semester, which was different from the spring, where it ran twice but didn't allow students to register for the courses. Students can only register once a semester.

- **Impact**

| Programs | | Budget |
|--------------|---|------------------|
| 1 | Tech Incubator/ support services (e.g., personnel, instruction, program management, newsletter, webinars, counseling) | \$184,000 |
| 2 | Technology equipment and OTPS | \$50,000 |
| 3 | AR/VR Unity Training | \$36,000 |
| 4 | IT Manager at the Tech Center and CUNY on the Concourse. | \$50,000 |
| 5 | Small Business Internship Program Manager and faculty | \$130,000 |
| Total | | \$450,000 |

| Programs April, 2022, through December 2022 | Outcome |
|---|---------------|
| Tech Incubator members | 26 |
| AR/VR Unity Training (December numbers) | 40 |
| Computer-based GED and Person Vue | 128 |
| Bronx Business Council and Tech Center newsletter | 12,029 |
| Bronx Business Council | 20 |
| The Small Business Development Center (SBDC) events | 1052 |
| The Small Business Development Center (SBDC) new clients | 417 |
| Small Business Internship Program | 13+7 |
| Cannabis Workforce and Business Development Training Program (startup in process) | - |
| Digital skills training for small business employees | 348 |
| NCLEX, ESOL bridge to immigrant nursing program for English language learners | 16 |
| Upskilling Short Courses and Blackstone LaunchPad entrepreneurship program | 318 |
| Total | 14,414 |

- **Next steps**

Bronx Business Tech Incubator (Tech Center)

1. Although the college is maintaining its 70% opening rate, the Tech Center is moving to fulltime opening, thereby expanding the number of businesses and community residents served. The Testing Center, for example, will meet the needs of more Bronx residents.
2. Instructors will use HyFlex modalities to reach other learners, including trainee health care workers and ESL students
3. Legacy entrepreneurs who have received licenses to run dispensaries selling adult use marijuana will receive services at the Tech Center as they start up. To date the Tech Center has been able to reach out to two entrepreneurs (of the ten in NYC who have licenses) have expressed an interest in Tech Center services. SCPS is connected to the Bronx Defenders, the Bronx Community Foundation and the Bronx Cannabis Hub, among others, and participated in the dispensary pop up event which reached more than 1,200 people in December 2022.