



Partners Uplifting Our  
**Daughters & Sons**

## **2025 IMPACT REPORT**

Building Safety, Opportunity, and  
Healing With Youth at the Center



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2025, Partners Uplifting Our Daughters and Sons (PUDS) delivered a comprehensive, youth-centered portfolio of programming focused on economic opportunity, violence prevention, mental health, and leadership development. Operating as a community-rooted organization with a growing multi-city footprint, PUDS advanced a model that positions young people not as problems to be managed, but as leaders, entrepreneurs, and contributors to community safety and stability.

Throughout the year, PUDS implemented integrated, trauma-informed initiatives across New Jersey, New York, Alabama, and Massachusetts, responding to the interconnected realities of youth violence, economic instability, and unmet mental health needs. Programming was grounded in the belief that sustainable safety is achieved not through punishment or short-term intervention, but through consistent investment in opportunity, healing, and leadership pathways for young people.

In support of this work, PUDS successfully secured more than \$1.3 million in public and philanthropic investment in 2025, reflecting strong institutional confidence in the organization's model, leadership, and capacity for implementation across multiple systems and jurisdictions. These resources enabled PUDS to deliver high-impact, youth-centered programming at scale while strengthening infrastructure, accountability, and long-term sustainability.





## 2025 REACH AND SCALE

Across all programming in 2025, 845 youth were served nationwide through PUDS-operated and PUDS-aligned initiatives. This reach reflects both deep, place-based investment and expanding national engagement:

### 606 YOUTH

East Orange, New Jersey

### 171 YOUTH

New York City

### 48 YOUTH

Birmingham, Alabama

### 20 YOUTH

Boston, Massachusetts

Student counts reflect unique participants within each seasonal programming period. Collectively, these numbers represent the full scope of PUDS' youth-facing work in 2025, supported through coordinated local, municipal, and philanthropic investment.

## INTEGRATED PROGRAM APPROACH

PUDS' impact was driven by a coordinated model that integrates four core areas of focus:

### ➔ Economic Opportunity & Youth Entrepreneurship:

Through programs such as Boss Up, youth launched real businesses, earned income, and developed financial literacy, branding, and leadership skills. Entrepreneurship was intentionally leveraged as both an economic pathway and a violence prevention strategy.

### ➔ Public Safety & Violence Prevention:

In high-need communities, PUDS supported Community Violence Intervention and Junior Violence Interrupter programming that trained youth in conflict mediation, de-escalation, restorative practices, and peer leadership.

Youth played active roles in improving school climate and community safety.



### ➔ **Workforce Development & Earn-and-Learn:**

Paid workforce and summer employment programs combined structured work experience with leadership and entrepreneurship training. The Earn-and-Learn model reinforced accountability, consistency, and engagement by compensating youth for learning and leadership.

### ➔ **Youth Mental Health & Healing Justice:**

PUDS advanced youth-led mental health initiatives that addressed trauma, stress, and school climate through peer-to-peer support, research, and advocacy. Mental health was treated as a core component of youth safety and long-term success.

Across active cohorts, programs consistently demonstrated strong engagement, with many achieving attendance and completion rates exceeding 90 percent, reflecting the effectiveness of combining healing-centered practice with clear expectations and economic support.

## **FIELD BUILDING AND ORGANIZATIONAL GROWTH**

In addition to direct youth programming, 2025 marked a significant organizational milestone with the launch of PUDS' first-ever Boss Up Train-the-Trainer initiative. Through this effort, PUDS expanded beyond direct service delivery into capacity building and field development, training community-based organizations to implement trauma-informed entrepreneurship programming with fidelity and quality.

This phase of growth was made possible through targeted philanthropic investment, including support for curriculum dissemination, technical assistance, and organizational infrastructure.

PUDS also demonstrated strengthened fiscal stewardship and operational maturity throughout the year, reinforcing institutional trust and positioning the organization for sustained growth and expanded investment.

## LOOKING AHEAD

The outcomes documented in this report reflect more than programmatic success; they demonstrate a scalable, replicable approach to youth empowerment and community safety. By integrating economic opportunity, healing-centered support, violence prevention, and leadership development, PUDS has established a model capable of adapting to local contexts while maintaining a strong and proven core.

As the organization continues to grow, PUDS remains committed to deepening its impact in core communities while responsibly expanding its reach—building safer, healthier, and more resilient communities by investing in the leadership and potential of young people.







## 2025 National Impact Snapshot

Building Safety, Opportunity, and Healing Through Youth Leadership

In 2025, PUDS delivered a comprehensive, youth-centered portfolio of programming across four states, advancing economic opportunity, violence prevention, mental health, and leadership development development.

### IMPACT BY THE NUMBERS

**845**  
Youth Served Nationwide  
Across New Jersey, New York, Alabama, and Massachusetts

**\$1.3M+**  
Public & Philanthropic Investment Secured  
Demonstrating strong institutional confidence in the PUDS model

→ East Orange & Newark, NJ: **606**  
→ New York City, NY: **171**  
→ Birmingham, AL: **48**  
→ Boston, MA: **20**

**Total Youth Served in 2025: 845**

### 2025 PROGRAMMING FOOTPRINT



Student counts reflect unique participants within each seasonal programming period.

### OUR INTEGRATED MODEL IN ACTION

**Youth Served Nationwide**  
Boss Up supported youth in launching real businesses, earning income, and building leadership and financial skills.

**Youth Mental Health & Healing Justice**  
We Got Us empowered youth to lead peer mental health research, healing initiatives, and advocacy.

**Public Safety & Violence Prevention**  
Youth were trained as Junior Violence Interrupters and peer leaders, contributing to safer

**Workforce Development & Earn + Learn**  
Paid learning models reinforced accountability, consistency, and real-world skill development.





## SECTION 2. ABOUT PARTNERS UPLIFTING OUR DAUGHTERS AND SONS (PUDS)



Partners Uplifting Our Daughters and Sons (PUDS) is a community-rooted organization dedicated to empowering young people, strengthening families, and advancing long-term community safety through opportunity, healing, and leadership. Founded in response to persistent gaps in traditional youth-serving systems, PUDS was built to engage young people who are often overlooked, misunderstood, or pushed out of conventional pathways to success.

At its core, PUDS operates from the belief that youth most impacted by violence, economic instability, and trauma are not inherently at risk of failure—but are instead navigating systems that were not designed with their realities in mind. PUDS exists to bridge that gap by centering youth voice, lived experience, and accountability within programming that delivers real-world skills, economic opportunity, and pathways to leadership.

## MISSION & VISION

PUDS' mission is to create pathways for young people to thrive by integrating economic opportunity, healing-centered support, and leadership development into community-based programming. The organization envisions communities where youth are equipped not only to avoid harm, but to actively contribute to safety, stability, and collective well-being.

Rather than focusing solely on crisis response, PUDS is committed to prevention, early intervention, and long-term capacity building. The organization's work is grounded in the understanding that sustainable community change requires consistent investment in young people as leaders, problem-solvers, and economic contributors.

## A YOUTH-CENTERED, SYSTEMS-CHANGE APPROACH

PUDS employs a youth-centered, systems-change approach that positions young people as partners in solutions rather than passive recipients of services. Programming is designed to meet youth where they are—socially, emotionally, and economically—while maintaining clear expectations around accountability, participation, and leadership.

Key elements of this approach include:

- ➔ **Youth Leadership:** Young people are trained and supported to take on visible leadership roles within their schools, peer groups, and communities.
- ➔ **Credible Messengers:** Staff and facilitators bring lived experience and cultural competence, enabling authentic relationships rooted in trust and respect.
- ➔ **Healing-Centered Practice:** Programming acknowledges trauma while emphasizing resilience, agency, and collective healing rather than deficit-based narratives.
- ➔ **Systems Integration:** PUDS works alongside schools, workforce systems, and community partners to align programming with institutional structures and inform broader strategy.



By operating at the intersection of community engagement and systems alignment, PUDS is able to address both immediate needs and structural barriers that contribute to youth instability.

## EARN + LEARN AS A STRATEGY FOR SAFETY AND STABILITY

A defining feature of the PUDS model is its use of Earn + Learn as a core strategy for youth safety and stabilization. PUDS recognizes that economic instability is a major driver of risk, disengagement, and exposure to harm—particularly for youth navigating under-resourced environments.

Through paid programming, stipends, and entrepreneurship-based income opportunities, Earn + Learn reframes compensation as a tool for accountability and dignity rather than an incentive.



Youth are compensated for:

- ➔ Consistent participation
- ➔ Skill development and learning
- ➔ Leadership roles and responsibility
- ➔ Contribution to community-based initiatives

This approach reinforces structure, reliability, and purpose while reducing reliance on informal or street-based economies. By linking income to growth, accountability, and leadership, Earn + Learn strengthens protective factors and supports long-term workforce readiness.

Importantly, Earn + Learn is not implemented in isolation. It is intentionally paired with mentorship, healing-centered support, and leadership development to ensure that economic opportunity translates into sustained stability and positive outcomes.

## POSITIONING FOR IMPACT

Together, PUDS' mission, youth-centered philosophy, and Earn + Learn strategy form a cohesive model designed to produce lasting change. This foundation enables the organization to deliver consistent, high-quality programming across varied contexts while maintaining a strong and values-driven core.

The following section provides a data-informed snapshot of how this model translated into measurable reach, engagement, and outcomes during the 2025 program year.





## The PUDS Youth-Centered Model


Building Safety, Opportunity, and Healing

In 2025, PUDS delivered a comprehensive, youth-centered portfolio of programming across four states, advancing economic opportunity, violence prevention, mental health, and leadership development.



Safety and stability are achieved through opportunity, healing, and youth leadership — not through punishment or control.





## SECTION 3. 2025 IMPACT SNAPSHOT

In 2025, Partners Uplifting Our Daughters and Sons (PUDS) delivered integrated, trauma-informed programming across multiple cities and states, reaching youth through entrepreneurship, violence prevention, workforce development, and youth mental health leadership. The data presented in this section reflects the combined reach and outcomes of all PUDS-operated and PUDS-aligned programs implemented during the year, supported by coordinated public and philanthropic investment. This snapshot is intended to provide a clear, high-level view of who was served, where programming occurred, and how youth engaged, before moving into detailed program-specific analysis in subsequent sections.

## GEOGRAPHIC REACH

During the 2025 program year, PUDS implemented programming across four states and multiple cities, reflecting both deep place-based investment and expanding national reach.

### 606 YOUTH

East Orange, New Jersey

### 171 YOUTH

New York City

### 48 YOUTH

Birmingham, Alabama

### 20 YOUTH

Boston, Massachusetts

### 845

Total Youth Served Nationwide (2025):

Student counts reflect unique participants within each seasonal programming period. Together, these figures represent the full scope of PUDS' youth-facing programming during the year and correspond to targeted local investments aligned with community need, system readiness, and implementation capacity.



## YOUTH SERVED & ENGAGEMENT

### Across all programs in 2025:

- ➔ 845 youth participated in PUDS-supported programming
- ➔ Programs consistently achieved high attendance and completion rates, with many cohorts exceeding 90 percent participation
- ➔ Multiple initiatives operated under Earn + Learn models, compensating youth for participation, leadership, and skill development

Youth engagement included structured group programming, paid summer initiatives, entrepreneurship training, leadership certification, and peer-led research and advocacy. Engagement occurred in schools, community settings, workforce sites, college campuses, and public civic spaces—ensuring consistent access and visibility across environments.

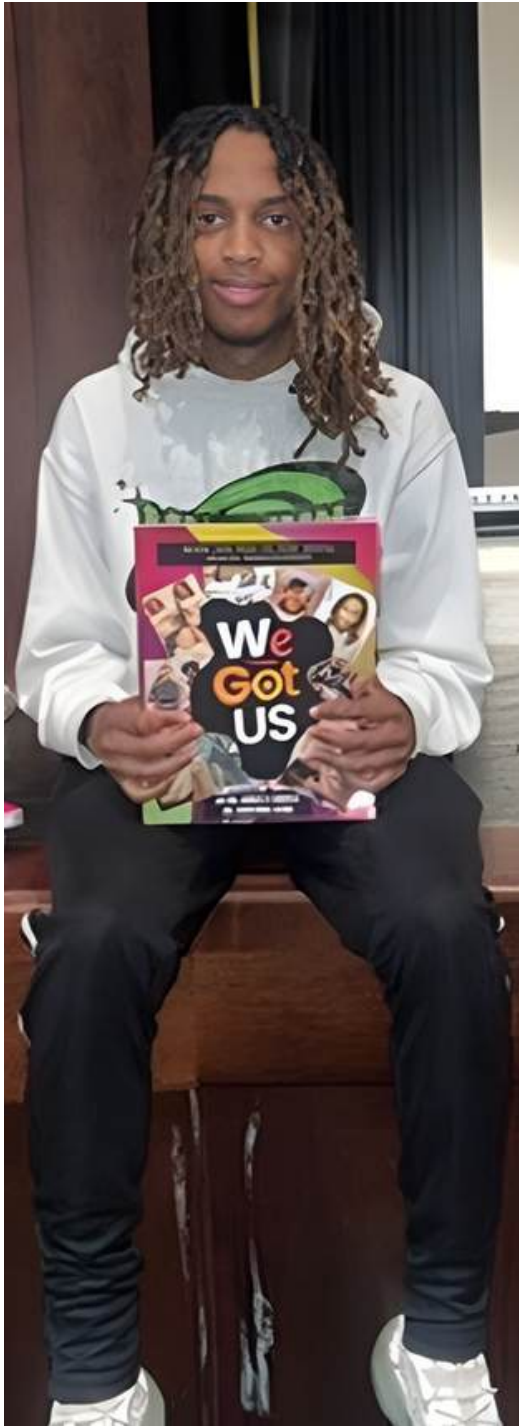
## CORE PROGRAM AREAS

PUDS' 2025 programming addressed four interconnected impact areas that together form a comprehensive youth safety and empowerment strategy.



### Youth Entrepreneurship & Economic Opportunity

- ➔ Youth launched real businesses through the Boss Up Teen Entrepreneurship Program
- ➔ Participants engaged in pop-up shops, showcases, and public-facing sales experiences
- ➔ Programming emphasized financial literacy, branding, leadership, and accountability
- ➔ Entrepreneurship was positioned as a pathway to income, stability, and long-term opportunity



### Public Safety & Violence Prevention

- ➔ Youth participated in Community Violence Intervention and Junior Violence Interrupter programming
- ➔ Participants received training in de-escalation, mediation, restorative practices, and peer leadership
- ➔ Certified youth leaders contributed directly to safer school and community environments
- ➔ Programming emphasized prevention, accountability, and youth-led solutions to conflict

### Workforce Development & Earn + Learn

- ➔ Intensive summer and year-round programs combined paid work experience with leadership and entrepreneurship training
- ➔ Partnerships with school districts, workforce agencies, and municipal systems supported structured participation
- ➔ Earn + Learn models reinforced consistency, accountability, and engagement while building transferable workforce skills

### Youth Mental Health & Healing Justice

- ➔ Youth-led mental health initiatives addressed trauma, stress, and school climate
- ➔ Participants engaged in peer-to-peer support, research, community mapping, and advocacy
- ➔ Youth developed surveys, resource guides, healing tools, and policy recommendations
- ➔ Mental health was integrated as a core component of youth safety, leadership, and success

## LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT & CERTIFICATION

In 2025, PUDS-supported youth:

- ➔ Earned certifications as Junior Violence Interrupters and peer leaders
- ➔ Participated in leadership development focused on communication, accountability, and civic engagement
- ➔ Returned as mentors, ambassadors, and facilitators in select programs

These outcomes reflect PUDS' commitment to positioning youth as leaders and contributors rather than passive recipients of services, reinforcing leadership as both a protective factor and a pathway to long-term opportunity.

## CAPACITY BUILDING & REPLICATION

In addition to direct youth programming, 2025 marked a significant milestone in organizational growth and field-building.

- ➔ Seven community-based organizations were trained through PUDS' first-ever Boss Up Train-the-Trainer initiative
- ➔ Curriculum materials, implementation guidance, and trauma-informed quality standards were shared to support faithful delivery
- ➔ Two partner organizations implemented Boss Up programming with their own youth cohorts, who successfully completed the program and received startup funding

This work expanded PUDS' impact beyond direct service delivery and laid the foundation for responsible replication, system alignment, and long-term scale.



## PARTNERSHIPS & SYSTEMS ALIGNMENT

PUDS' 2025 impact was made possible through partnerships with:

- ➔ Municipal and state agencies
- ➔ School districts and workforce development systems
- ➔ Colleges and universities
- ➔ Community-based organizations

These partnerships reflect trust in PUDS' ability to deliver credible, results-driven programming rooted in community voice, lived experience, fiscal accountability, and implementation excellence.

## SNAPSHOT SUMMARY

The 2025 Impact Snapshot demonstrates that PUDS is:

- ➔ Operating across multiple cities and systems
- ➔ Serving 845 youth nationwide through integrated programming
- ➔ Achieving high levels of engagement and completion
- ➔ Delivering real-world outcomes tied to safety, leadership, and economic opportunity
- ➔ Expanding from direct service into capacity building and replication

Together, these results position Partners Uplifting Our Daughters and Sons as a growing, scalable organization advancing a proven, youth-centered model for long-term community transformation.





## 2025 Impact Snapshot

Who We Served. Where We Worked. How Youth Engaged.

# 845

Youth Served Nationwide



### Core Program Areas

 <p><b>Economic Opportunity &amp; Youth Entrepreneurship</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Earn + Learn</li><li>✓ Workforce Pathways</li></ul>	 <p><b>Public Safety &amp; Violence Prevention</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Community Violence Intervention</li><li>✓ Junior Violence Interrupters</li><li>✓ Safe Passage</li></ul>	 <p><b>Workforce Development &amp; Earn + Learn</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ We Got Us</li><li>✓ Peer-to-Peer Support</li><li>✓ Youth-Led Research</li></ul>	 <p><b>Youth Mental Health &amp; Healing Justice</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Ve Got Us</li><li>✓ Peer-to-Peer Support</li><li>✓ Youth-Led Research</li></ul>
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## 90%+ Completion Rates Across Multiple Cohorts

Reflects sustained participation and program effectiveness.



## SECTION 4. ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY & YOUTH ENTREPRENEURSHIP



Economic opportunity is a central strategy through which Partners Uplifting Our Daughters and Sons (PUDS) advances youth leadership, workforce readiness, and long-term community stability. In 2025, PUDS continued to demonstrate that youth entrepreneurship is not only a pathway to income, but a powerful tool for violence prevention, confidence-building, and civic engagement.

Through its flagship Boss Up Teen Entrepreneurship Program, PUDS delivered one of the most comprehensive, equity-driven youth entrepreneurship initiatives operating across multiple cities. Boss Up equips young people with the skills, resources, and real-world experience needed to transform ideas into viable businesses and leadership into lasting impact.

## 4.1 BOSS UP NYC (FLAGSHIP PROGRAM)

### Program Scope & Public Investment

Boss Up NYC serves as the flagship implementation of PUDS' youth entrepreneurship model and the foundation upon which all national expansion and capacity-building efforts are based. Supported through sustained public investment, the program has demonstrated consistent growth, strong outcomes, and broad geographic reach across New York City.

**\$750,000**

Total Public Investment (3 Years)

**444**

Youth Entrepreneurs Served

**\$250,000**

Annual Investment

**12**

Council Districts Reached

**BRONX, BROOKLYN, MANHATTAN, QUEENS**

Boroughs Served

This sustained investment positioned Boss Up NYC as one of New York City's most expansive and stable youth entrepreneurship pipelines.

### Participation Growth & Annual Reach

Boss Up NYC experienced consistent year-over-year growth, reaching its largest cohort in 2025:

Program Year	Youth Served
2023	122
2024	151
2025	171
Total (3 Years)	444

This growth reflects strong recruitment, high retention, and continued demand from youth, families, and community partners.

### Equitable Citywide Distribution

Boss Up NYC intentionally prioritized communities facing the greatest barriers to economic mobility:

**222 YOUTH**

Bronx

**66 YOUTH**

Manhattan

**101 YOUTH**

Brooklyn

**55 YOUTH**

Queens

Programming spanned 12 City Council Districts, ensuring equitable access to entrepreneurship opportunities across neighborhoods historically underserved by traditional workforce and business development systems..

### Entrepreneurship Outcomes

Across three years of implementation, Boss Up NYC produced measurable economic outcomes:

- ➔ 100+ youth-led businesses launched and publicly showcased
- ➔ Youth participated in pitch competitions, pop-up shops, and public expos
- ➔ Startup grants awarded, with individual youth receiving up to \$5,000
- ➔ Thousands of community members engaged through youth-led sales events and showcases

Youth businesses represented a wide range of industries, including apparel, technology, beauty, food services, education, and creative enterprises.

### Skill Development & Workforce Readiness

Boss Up NYC participants demonstrated growth across multiple competency areas:

- ➔ Business Development: idea validation, pricing, production, and customer engagement
- ➔ Financial Literacy: budgeting, savings, and revenue planning
- ➔ Leadership & Communication: public speaking, pitching, and professional presence



- ➔ Workforce Readiness: accountability, collaboration, and time management

Beyond technical skills, youth consistently reported increased confidence, stronger academic motivation, and a clearer vision for postsecondary and career pathways.

### Leadership Pipeline & Alumni Engagement

Boss Up NYC extended impact beyond initial participation by cultivating a leadership pipeline:

- ➔ Alumni returned as Teen Ambassadors and peer mentors
- ➔ Returning youth supported recruitment, facilitation, and cohort engagement



- ➔ Several youth-led ventures evolved into formal businesses and nonprofit organizations, including successful 501(c)(3) launches

This alumni model reinforced continuity, peer accountability, and youth ownership of the program.

### Public Recognition & Visibility

Boss Up NYC received significant validation and national visibility, including:

- ➔ Media features in PIX11, News12 Bronx, AMNY, Caribbean Life, and Amsterdam News
- ➔ Recognition by the National Youth Employment Coalition (NYEC) as a best-practice model
- ➔ Presentations at national convenings, including FINFEST and Pull Up for Peace
- ➔ Identification as a nationally replicable model rooted in New York City

These recognitions elevated youth voices and reinforced the program's credibility with policymakers and funders.



### Return on Investment

With an annual investment of \$250,000, Boss Up NYC delivered:

**444**

youth entrepreneurs trained

**100+**

businesses launched

**12**

Citywide reach across

A proven model now scaled nationally through Train-the-Trainer partnerships

The program demonstrates a high-impact, cost-effective approach to addressing youth unemployment, economic inequity, and community instability.

### Flagship Significance

Boss Up NYC is more than a local success—it is the proof point that enabled PUDS to expand into new cities and launch its Train-the-Trainer model, equipping other organizations to implement youth entrepreneurship programming with fidelity and impact.



## 4.2 BOSS UP BOSTON: SUMMER YOUTH WORK EXPERIENCE (MULTI-YEAR IMPACT)

In 2024 and 2025, Partners Uplifting Our Daughters and Sons (PUDS) implemented the Boss Up Teen Entrepreneurship Program in Boston for two consecutive summers, establishing the site as a sustained, multi-year implementation rather than a pilot. Over two program cycles, Boss Up Boston demonstrated strong retention, leadership continuity, and consistent entrepreneurship outcomes—affirming the model's effectiveness outside New York City.

Delivered as an eight-week Summer Youth Work Experience, Boss Up Boston combined paid participation, hands-on business development, and leadership training for youth from historically underserved Boston communities.

### Two-Year Program Overview (2024–2025)

Across two consecutive summers:

- ➔ Program Length: 8 weeks per year
- ➔ Total Youth Served: 49
- ➔ Age Range: 14–18
- ➔ Gender Representation: Male and female youth
- ➔ Neighborhoods Represented: Dorchester, Roxbury, Mattapan, Hyde Park, Roslindale, East Boston, Milton
- ➔ Attendance & Engagement: Consistently high, with attendance rates reaching 98–99%



Boss Up Boston achieved near-universal completion across both years, reflecting strong youth engagement and effective program design.

### Entrepreneurship Outcomes (Two-Year Total)

Across the 2024 and 2025 program years, Boss Up Boston produced concrete economic outcomes:

**49**

youth entrepreneurs trained

**07**

total pop-up shops and public showcases

**07**

youth entrepreneurs trained

**\$5000+ IN 2025 ALONE**

Thousands of dollars in youth-generated revenue, including an estimated





Youth businesses included apparel, beauty and personal care products, creative goods, and service-based ventures—demonstrating the program’s versatility and real-world relevance.

### **Curriculum Completion & Skill Development**

Across both years:

- ➔ Youth completed all 9 core Boss Up curriculum chapters, covering:
  - Entrepreneurship fundamentals
  - Financial literacy
  - Branding and marketing
  - Leadership and professionalism
- ➔ Programs achieved 99% curriculum completion rates
- ➔ Participants demonstrated measurable growth in confidence, business planning, public speaking, and teamwork

This consistency across years reinforces the strength and replicability of the Boss Up instructional model.

### Leadership Continuity & Alumni Pipeline

Boston's second year of implementation showed a clear leadership pipeline, a critical marker of sustainability:

- ➔ 9 returning students from the first cohort participated in the second year
- ➔ 3 alumni returned as mentors, supporting newer participants
- ➔ Several alumni expanded or rebranded their businesses, transitioning from initial ventures (hair, lashes, nails) into clothing brands
- ➔ 6 alumni were enrolled in college while continuing to work part-time or operate businesses

This alumni engagement mirrors the leadership pipeline established in NYC and confirms Boston as a maturing site.



### Recognition, Scholarships & Civic Validation

Across the two program years, Boston youth received notable recognition:

- ➔ 3 graduating seniors earned scholarships through a YMCA partnership
- ➔ 2 students received the City of Boston Mayor's Office of Women's Advancement – Extraordinary Women Award
- ➔ Youth businesses and program outcomes were highlighted through community events and radio exposure, including Jamn 94.5

These recognitions underscore both youth achievement and institutional trust.

## Community Partnerships

Boss Up Boston operated in collaboration with multiple community partners across both years, including:

- ➔ YMCA
- ➔ We Are Better Together
- ➔ Department of Corrections

Community leaders and stakeholders consistently expressed excitement about the program's continuation and the outcomes achieved within each summer cycle.

## Challenges & Program Learning (Applied Across Years)

Across both cohorts, the program identified shared challenges:



- ➔ Limited access to technology and production resources
- ➔ Varying levels of familiarity with business tools and platforms

These lessons directly informed program improvements, including:

- ➔ Planning for early distribution of laptops
- ➔ Structured onboarding to digital tools such as Canva and Google Classroom
- ➔ Expanded alumni support networks and mentorship opportunities

Importantly, these lessons strengthened not only Boston's program, but the national Boss Up model.





### Significance for Replication

The two-year success of Boss Up Boston demonstrates that the model:

- ➔ Sustains high engagement across multiple years
- ➔ Builds leadership continuity and alumni mentorship
- ➔ Produces consistent entrepreneurship outcomes
- ➔ Translates effectively to new city contexts

Boston's multi-year performance directly contributed to PUDS' readiness to launch its Train-the-Trainer initiative, positioning Boss Up as a scalable, field-tested entrepreneurship platform.

## 4.3 BOSS UP EAST ORANGE: COLLEGE-BASED ENTREPRENEURSHIP AT ESSEX COUNTY COLLEGE

In 2024 and 2025, Partners Uplifting Our Daughters and Sons (PUDS) implemented the Boss Up Teen Entrepreneurship Program in East Orange as a college-based entrepreneurship initiative hosted at Essex County College. Entering its second consecutive year, this site intentionally connected youth entrepreneurship with higher education exposure, reinforcing the message that economic opportunity, leadership development, and postsecondary access are interconnected pathways.

By situating Boss Up within a college campus environment, PUDS created a learning experience that extended beyond business training alone. Youth engaged in hands-on entrepreneurship while becoming familiar with postsecondary spaces, expectations, and possibilities—helping to normalize college access while delivering tangible economic and leadership outcomes.

### Program Overview

Boss Up East Orange operated as part of the broader East Orange Safe Passage Empowerment Program, supported by the New Jersey Office of Violence Prevention and Prevention Services.

Program Details

- ➔ **Location:** Essex County College
- ➔ **Format:** College-based Saturday entrepreneurship program
- ➔ **Program Length:** 10 weeks
- ➔ **Years Implemented:** 2024 and 2025
- ➔ **Primary Focus:** Youth entrepreneurship, leadership development, and college exposure

This design intentionally placed youth within a higher education setting while grounding instruction in real-world business development and leadership practice.

## Participation & Engagement

During the 2025 program year:

- ➔ 34 youth participated in the Boss Up East Orange entrepreneurship cohort
- ➔ Participants were primarily high school-aged youth from East Orange
- ➔ The cohort contributed to the initiative's 91.6 percent average attendance rate
- ➔ Completion outcomes aligned with the program's 90 percent or higher completion benchmark



Boss Up East Orange functioned as a distinct entrepreneurship cohort within a larger, layered New Jersey ecosystem that supported 606 unique youth across East Orange and Newark, reinforcing place-based impact, continuity of engagement, and alignment with broader violence prevention and youth leadership strategies.

## Entrepreneurship Outcomes

Boss Up East Orange produced measurable, real-world entrepreneurship outcomes:

- ➔ 18 youth-led businesses launched
- ➔ 18 original product lines developed
- ➔ Youth participated in multiple public-facing sales and showcase opportunities, including:
  - Brooklyn Juneteenth Pop-Up Shop
  - National Teen Entrepreneurship Expo

These experiences moved youth beyond classroom learning into business execution, customer engagement, and public presentation.



### Earn + Learn Investment

The program provided direct financial support through an Earn + Learn model:

- ➔ \$15,750 distributed in stipends and seed funding

Funds supported:

- ➔ Business startup materials
- ➔ Inventory and supplies
- ➔ Participation in regional and national entrepreneurship events

This structure reinforced accountability, professionalism, and economic agency while reducing reliance on informal income sources.

### College Exposure & Educational Aspiration

A defining feature of Boss Up East Orange was consistent, intentional exposure to higher education. By meeting weekly at Essex County College, participants:

- ➔ Gained familiarity with navigating a college campus
- ➔ Learned within postsecondary classroom settings
- ➔ Connected entrepreneurship skills to academic and career pathways

One participant reflected:

**“Being at Essex County College every Saturday showed me that college is possible for me. I can see myself here.”**

**— Boss Up Participant, 11th Grade**



This exposure strengthened educational aspiration while reinforcing entrepreneurship as a viable pathway alongside college enrollment.

### **Skill Development & Leadership Growth**

Participants completed the full Boss Up curriculum, developing competencies in:

- ➔ Entrepreneurship fundamentals
- ➔ Financial literacy and budgeting
- ➔ Branding, marketing, and pitching
- ➔ Leadership, communication, and professionalism

Youth demonstrated increased confidence, public speaking ability, financial awareness, and leadership readiness—contributing to broader Safe Passage goals related to youth empowerment and community stability.

### **Program Significance**

As a second-year college-based site, Boss Up East Orange demonstrates that the Boss Up model can:

- ➔ Operate successfully within higher education institutions
- ➔ Increase college awareness and aspiration among high school-aged youth
- ➔ Integrate entrepreneurship into violence prevention and Safe Passage frameworks
- ➔ Produce measurable economic, leadership, and educational outcomes

This site represents a strategic bridge between youth entrepreneurship, public safety, and postsecondary access—illustrating how place-based, Earn + Learn programming can support both individual success and community stability within a statewide violence prevention ecosystem.

## 4.4 BOSS UP BIRMINGHAM: COLLEGE-BASED ENTREPRENEURSHIP AT MILES COLLEGE (FIRST-YEAR EXPANSION)

In 2025, Partners Uplifting Our Daughters and Sons (PUDS) launched the Boss Up Teen Entrepreneurship Program in Birmingham, Alabama as a first-year, college-based initiative hosted at Miles College. This marked a significant milestone in the organization's national growth, bringing its flagship entrepreneurship model to the Deep South through a partnership with a Historically Black College and University (HBCU).

Boss Up Birmingham positioned youth entrepreneurship as both an economic mobility strategy and a violence prevention intervention, aligning with the City of Birmingham's broader public safety and youth empowerment goals.

### Program Overview

Boss Up Birmingham was delivered as part of a coordinated ecosystem of youth empowerment initiatives led by the Institute of Research for Social Justice in Action (IRSJA) in partnership with the Birmingham Office of Community Safety Initiatives.

Program Details:

- ➔ **Location:** Miles College (HBCU campus)
- ➔ **Program Model:** Teen entrepreneurship, leadership development, and Earn-and-Learn
- ➔ **Implementation Year:** 2025 (first year)
- ➔ **Target Population:** Birmingham middle school and high school youth

Hosting the program on a college campus reinforced exposure to higher education while grounding learning in real-world business development.

## Participation & Reach

During its first year:

- ➔ 48 Birmingham youth participated in the Boss Up Teen Entrepreneurship workshops and program activities
- ➔ Youth were engaged through structured training, hands-on business development, and public showcases
- ➔ Participants were part of a broader youth empowerment strategy integrating entrepreneurship, leadership, and violence prevention

## Entrepreneurship Outcomes

Boss Up Birmingham generated immediate and measurable economic outcomes in its inaugural year:



- ➔ 40+ youth-owned businesses launched
- ➔ Youth developed original products and service-based ventures
- ➔ Participants received branding support, mentorship, and coaching to move from concept to execution
- ➔ Youth businesses were publicly showcased, reinforcing confidence, professionalism, and community visibility

These outcomes demonstrate the Boss Up model's ability to translate rapidly into tangible economic activity, even in a first-year expansion context.

### Earn-and-Learn & Direct Youth Investment

A defining feature of Boss Up Birmingham was its direct financial investment in youth:

- ➔ \$70,000 regranted directly to youth through Earn-and-Learn wages and business startup funding
- ➔ Funds supported:
  - Business materials and inventory
  - Workforce participation
  - Entrepreneurship training and mentorship

This investment positioned youth as economic actors, not just program participants, reinforcing entrepreneurship as a viable pathway to stability and leadership .

### College Exposure & Higher Education Pathways

By hosting Boss Up at Miles College, participants gained:

- ➔ Exposure to an HBCU campus environment
- ➔ Familiarity with college classrooms and learning spaces
- ➔ Reinforcement that higher education and entrepreneurship are complementary pathways

This model intentionally connected college aspiration with economic opportunity, particularly for youth historically underrepresented in postsecondary institutions.





### Public Visibility, Press & Community Impact

Boss Up Birmingham received significant local and regional media attention, elevating youth voices and positioning entrepreneurship as a tool for violence prevention and community healing.

Coverage included:

- ➔ The Birmingham Times
- ➔ WBRC Fox 6 News
- ➔ Alabama Political Reporter
- ➔ City-wide announcements tied to summer violence reduction initiatives

Youth entrepreneurs and program leaders were publicly recognized, reinforcing pride, legitimacy, and community buy-in .



### Alignment With Violence Prevention Strategy

Boss Up Birmingham was embedded within a broader safety ecosystem that included:

- ➔ Junior Violence Interrupter programming
- ➔ Rise Up Birmingham youth leadership initiatives
- ➔ One Hood WENS community-based violence prevention

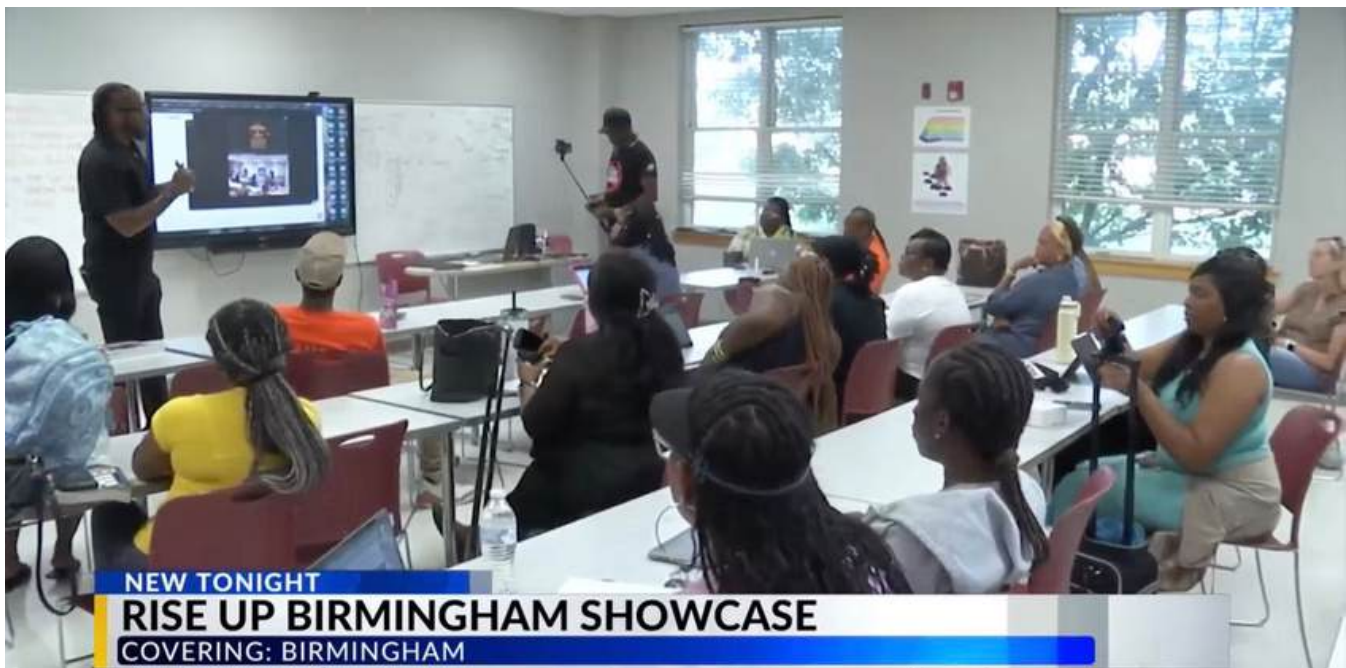
By pairing entrepreneurship with leadership and prevention, the program advanced a holistic public safety approach rooted in opportunity, dignity, and youth agency.

### Significance of First-Year Expansion

As a first-year site, Boss Up Birmingham:

- ➔ Demonstrated rapid scalability of the Boss Up model
- ➔ Validated the effectiveness of college-based implementation at an HBCU
- ➔ Generated immediate economic and leadership outcomes
- ➔ Elevated youth entrepreneurship as a violence prevention strategy

Alongside NYC, Boston, and East Orange, Birmingham represents a critical pillar in PUDS' growing national footprint.



## Economic Opportunity & Youth Entrepreneurship

Building income, ownership, and workforce  
readiness through **Earn & Learn**



**\$250,000+**  
Earn & Learn



Earn & Learn Stipends

Teen Businesses

**100+**



Earn &  
Learn Stipends

**273**



Youth  
Entrepreneurs

**5 Cities**



Newark · East Orange · NYC  
Birmingham · Boston



Entrepreneurship



College-Based  
Programs



Community-  
Based Programs



Workforce  
Pathways





## SECTION 5. PUBLIC SAFETY & VIOLENCE PREVENTION



In 2025, Partners Uplifting Our Daughters and Sons (PUDS) advanced public safety through youth-centered, prevention-focused strategies that addressed violence at its roots by expanding opportunity, leadership, and community accountability. Rather than relying on enforcement-only responses, PUDS invested in credible youth leadership, Earn-and-Learn prevention models, and school- and community-based intervention.

Public safety programming was delivered in New Jersey and Alabama, integrating violence interruption, leadership development, and economic opportunity into a coordinated prevention framework.

## 5.1 NEW JERSEY: COMMUNITY VIOLENCE INTERVENTION & SAFE PASSAGE

In New Jersey, Partners Uplifting Our Daughters and Sons (PUDS) implemented a comprehensive, year-round Community Violence Intervention (CVI) and Safe Passage strategy across East Orange and Newark's West Ward, supported by the New Jersey Office of Violence Prevention and Prevention Services. The initiative was designed to stabilize school environments, interrupt conflict, and position youth as visible leaders in community safety.

Rather than operating as standalone programs, Safe Passage and CVI functioned as an integrated public safety framework—combining consistent adult presence, structured youth leadership development, and Earn + Learn engagement to address both immediate safety risks and the underlying drivers of community violence.

### Program Design & Implementation

New Jersey programming was intentionally embedded across multiple settings to ensure continuity, trust, and accountability, including:

- ➔ Public middle and high schools
- ➔ College campuses
- ➔ Community and civic spaces

This multi-setting design ensured consistent engagement throughout the school year and during high-risk transition periods before and after school.

Core components included:

- ➔ Youth leadership development and certification
- ➔ Conflict de-escalation, mediation, and restorative practices
- ➔ Daily Safe Passage coverage along identified high-risk school corridors
- ➔ Earn + Learn engagement tied to participation, leadership, and accountability

Together, these elements formed a layered prevention ecosystem that reinforced safety, structure, and positive youth identity across school and community environments.

### **Youth Participation & Reach (New Jersey)**

Across New Jersey during the 2025 program year:

- ➔ 606 unique youth were served through CVI, Safe Passage-aligned programming, Earn + Learn engagement, and leadership-based violence prevention initiatives
- ➔ Youth were engaged across seven schools in East Orange, with additional community-based cohorts and outreach in Newark's West Ward
- ➔ Programs maintained a 91.6 percent average attendance rate
- ➔ Completion rates exceeded 90 percent across structured program components

Participants included both middle school and high school-aged youth, with programming tailored to developmental stage, school context, and community need.

Student counts reflect unique enrolled participants within New Jersey programming and do not include population-level Safe Passage corridor presence.

## Youth Leadership & Violence Interruption

A defining feature of the New Jersey CVI model was the elevation of youth into visible, accountable leadership roles within their schools and communities.

Youth completed structured training in:

- ➔ Conflict resolution and de-escalation
- ➔ Peer mediation and restorative justice
- ➔ Accountability, professionalism, and community responsibility
- ➔ Public speaking and civic engagement



Trained youth leaders actively supported:

- ➔ Safe transitions before and after school
- ➔ Peer-to-peer conflict interruption
- ➔ Relationship-building and positive school climate

Multiple participants advanced into Junior Violence Interrupter roles, strengthening prevention strategies that operate within youth social networks and increasing the credibility and effectiveness of intervention efforts.

### Earn + Learn as a Public Safety Strategy

Earn + Learn was integrated as a core public safety and stabilization strategy across New Jersey programming.

Youth received stipends tied to:

- ➔ Consistent participation
- ➔ Leadership responsibilities
- ➔ Accountability and professional conduct

This approach positioned economic opportunity as a protective factor against violence, reinforcing structure, reliability, and purpose. By compensating youth for positive engagement and leadership, PUDS strengthened retention, reduced disengagement, and affirmed youth as contributors to community safety rather than passive recipients of services.

### College-Based Prevention & Higher Education Exposure

Through programming hosted at Essex County College, violence prevention was intentionally connected to long-term educational aspiration.

Youth experienced:

- ➔ Regular exposure to postsecondary environments
- ➔ Reinforcement that college access, leadership, and safety are interconnected
- ➔ Reduced disengagement through aspirational, structured settings



By situating prevention work within a college context, PUDS linked immediate safety strategies to future-oriented pathways—demonstrating that violence prevention and educational opportunity are mutually reinforcing.

### Section Significance

The New Jersey CVI and Safe Passage initiative illustrates how community-based violence prevention can function as public safety infrastructure. By integrating youth leadership, Earn + Learn economic engagement, and institutional alignment, PUDS supported 606 young people, stabilized school environments, and strengthened trust across East Orange and Newark's West Ward.

This model demonstrates the power of coordinated, youth-centered prevention strategies to deliver measurable safety, leadership, and systems-level outcomes.



## 5.2 ALABAMA: YOUTH-LED VIOLENCE PREVENTION & LEADERSHIP (BIRMINGHAM)

In Birmingham, Alabama, Partners Uplifting Our Daughters and Sons (PUDS) implemented youth-led violence prevention and leadership programming aligned with broader citywide safety strategies, in partnership with the Birmingham Office of Community Safety Initiatives. This work integrated youth entrepreneurship, leadership development, and Junior Violence Interrupter training into a comprehensive, opportunity-centered prevention framework.

Rather than isolating violence prevention from economic and leadership pathways, PUDS positioned youth as active contributors to community safety, reinforcing the connection between opportunity, accountability, and public safety.

### Program Overview

Birmingham programming emphasized:

- ➔ Youth leadership and civic responsibility
- ➔ Conflict de-escalation and mediation
- ➔ Economic opportunity as a violence prevention strategy
- ➔ Community-based visibility and trust-building

Programming was delivered alongside Boss Up entrepreneurship and Rise Up Birmingham initiatives, reinforcing a whole-youth approach that addressed safety, leadership development, and economic stability simultaneously.

### Youth Participation & Engagement (Birmingham)

During the 2025 program year:

- ➔ 48 unique youth participated in youth leadership and violence prevention programming
- ➔ Youth engaged through structured workshops, leadership training sessions, and community-based events
- ➔ Programming emphasized consistency, accountability, and peer leadership

Participants were supported through structured schedules, stipends, and mentorship, reinforcing reliability, professional conduct, and positive identity development.

### Junior Violence Interrupter & Leadership Outcomes

Youth participants completed structured training in:

- ➔ De-escalation techniques
- ➔ Peer mediation and effective communication
- ➔ Community accountability and responsibility
- ➔ Public engagement and leadership development

Trained youth leaders played visible roles in:

- ➔ Community events and safety activations
- ➔ Youth-led violence prevention messaging
- ➔ Peer-to-peer conflict interruption

This work positioned young people as agents of safety and stability, rather than subjects of surveillance or enforcement.



## Public Visibility & Community Trust

Birmingham's youth-led violence prevention work received:

- ➔ Local and regional media coverage
- ➔ Public recognition through city-aligned initiatives
- ➔ Community affirmation of youth leadership and impact

This visibility strengthened community trust, legitimacy, and buy-in, reinforcing the effectiveness of youth-driven prevention strategies.



## Public Safety Outcomes at a Glance

Across New Jersey and Alabama in 2025, PUDS' public safety work demonstrates that:

- ➔ Youth engagement paired with economic opportunity reduces risk factors
- ➔ Earn + Learn models strengthen accountability and retention
- ➔ Peer leadership enhances credibility and effectiveness
- ➔ Violence prevention is strongest when paired with opportunity and healing

PUDS' approach reflects a clear shift from reactive safety responses to proactive, youth-driven prevention grounded in leadership, lived experience, and opportunity.

## 5.3 NEW YORK CITY: JUNIOR VIOLENCE INTERRUPTER & YOUTH LEADERSHIP PROGRAMMING

In 2025, Partners Uplifting Our Daughters and Sons (PUDS) expanded its youth leadership, entrepreneurship, and violence prevention work in New York City, serving 171 unique youth across multiple initiatives. Programming emphasized leadership development, economic opportunity, and public safety, reinforcing PUDS' belief that youth most impacted by instability can become drivers of positive change when provided with structure, trust, and accountability.

As part of this broader New York City engagement, PUDS piloted the Junior Violence Interrupter (JVI) model on the Tilden Campus in Brooklyn, testing its effectiveness within a school-based urban environment and laying the groundwork for future expansion.

### Junior Violence Interrupter Pilot (Brooklyn)

The Brooklyn-based JVI pilot served a focused cohort of approximately 25 students, identified by school partners as high-risk and experiencing academic, behavioral, and community-level challenges.

Key features of the pilot included:

- ➔ Earn + Learn stipends tied to participation, accountability, and leadership
- ➔ Structured leadership development and conflict resolution training
- ➔ Peer mediation and restorative justice practices
- ➔ Consistent mentorship and trusted adult support

School administrators and staff reported measurable improvements in:

- ➔ Student behavior and emotional self-regulation
- ➔ Accountability and peer responsibility
- ➔ Engagement with school expectations, routines, and relationships





### Program Significance

The New York City JVI pilot reinforced PUDS' core approach: youth most impacted by violence can become leaders in prevention when opportunity, structure, and economic dignity are present.

The success of the Brooklyn cohort demonstrated:

- ➔ The adaptability of the Junior Violence Interrupter model within New York City school settings
- ➔ The effectiveness of Earn + Learn strategies in high-need urban environments
- ➔ A clear, scalable pathway for expanding youth-led violence prevention across New York City

Together, New York City's 2025 programming illustrates how targeted pilots can operate within a broader ecosystem of youth leadership, entrepreneurship, and public safety, strengthening both individual outcomes and school-community stability.

## Public Safety & Violence Prevention



**\$275,000+** Invested Directly in Youth  
**Public Safety Leadership Roles**

### 1 **100+** Junior Violence Interrupters Trained

- ✓ De-escalating conflicts
- ✓ Connecting peers to services

### 3 **90%+** Program Completion Rate

- ✓ Earn & Learn Stipends
- ✓ Trauma Informed Training
- ✓ Credentialing & Certification



### 2 Safe Passage Guides Protected School Students



### 4 Visible Youth Leaders Served as Community Protectors



- ✓ Reduced violence and conflict
- ✓ Gained community support and trust







## SECTION 6. YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH & HEALING JUSTICE

## WE GOT US: A FLAGSHIP YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH MODEL (INCUBATED THROUGH SWEP)

In 2025, Partners Uplifting Our Daughters and Sons (PUDS) advanced its youth mental health and healing justice work through We Got Us, a flagship initiative incubated through the Summer Work Experience Program (SWEP). Designed and led by young people, We Got Us integrates peer mental health leadership, youth-led research, public education, and policy advocacy to address the mental health crisis facing Black and Brown youth.

Rather than treating mental health as a private or clinical issue alone, We Got Us positions healing as a community responsibility and a public safety priority, with youth serving as leaders, researchers, and educators.

### Program Overview

We Got Us was implemented in East Orange as a youth-led mental health justice initiative, embedded within SWEP and the Law & Social Justice program.

Program Characteristics:

- ➔ Implementation Year: 2025
- ➔ Primary Site: East Orange
- ➔ Delivery Context: Summer Work Experience Program (Earn-and-Learn)
- ➔ Approach: Youth-led research, peer-to-peer mental health leadership, healing-centered design

The initiative addressed:

- ➔ Youth stress, anxiety, and depression
- ➔ School climate and safety
- ➔ Limited access to culturally responsive mental health resources
- ➔ The need for peer-led support systems

•



## Youth Participation & Engagement

During the 2025 program year:

- ➔ 65 youth completed a Youth Mental Health & School Climate Survey
- ➔ 150+ SWEPP participants engaged in community mapping, listening circles, and solution design
- ➔ Youth participation was compensated through an Earn-and-Learn framework, reinforcing accountability and leadership

Youth were not only respondents but active designers of solutions.

## Youth-Led Research & Data Collection

A defining feature of We Got Us is its emphasis on youth-generated data.

Youth participants:



- ➔ Designed and administered large-scale surveys
- ➔ Analyzed findings related to anxiety, depression, safety, and access to support
- ➔ Identified that:

### **OVER 40%**

of respondents felt anxious, overwhelmed, or depressed

### **NEARLY 1 IN 5**

reported serious thoughts of suicide

### **55%**

did not know where to go for help

### **ONLY 15%**

felt mental health is talked about enough in school

These findings informed all subsequent tools, events, and policy recommendations .

### Tools & Solutions Created by Youth

Youth translated research into tangible, peer-facing tools, including:

- ➔ Mental health games focused on emotional regulation and connection
- ➔ Two youth-created resource guides (children and teens)
- ➔ Peer-led listening circle models
- ➔ Writing-as-Healing activities (journaling, poetry, storytelling)
- ➔ A Know Your Rights: Mental Health Toolkit
- ➔ A draft Peer-to-Peer Mental Health Certification framework



Youth also created community maps identifying unsafe spaces and proposing wellness hubs, art spaces, and safe recreation areas as solutions.

### Inaugural We Got Us Community Day

In Summer 2025, youth hosted the first-ever We Got Us Community Day at the YMCA, marking a major milestone in the initiative's growth.

During the event, youth:

- ➔ Led peer mentoring and healing circles
- ➔ Distributed wellness kits
- ➔ Facilitated conversations on mental health and safety
- ➔ Educated community members using youth-created tools

This event transformed We Got Us from a program into a visible, community-wide movement and served as a proof-of-concept for future citywide expansion .



### Youth-Produced Mini-Documentary & Storytelling

As part of their leadership and advocacy work, youth produced a mini-documentary documenting:

- ➔ Their mental health journey
- ➔ The creation of We Got Us
- ➔ The impact of peer-to-peer support
- ➔ The inaugural We Got Us Community Day

The mini-documentary elevated youth voice, humanized the data, and created a shareable advocacy tool to support broader systems change.

### Press, Public Recognition & Media Coverage

We Got Us received earned media coverage, validating the initiative's impact and amplifying youth voices beyond East Orange.

Media coverage included:

- ➔ PIX11 News, highlighting the launch of We Got Us Day
- ➔ Chalkbeat, profiling youth mental health leadership
- ➔ Essex News Daily, covering the program and youth ambassadors

In addition, youth leaders and Peer-to-Peer Ambassadors received formal recognition from the City of East Orange, reinforcing the initiative's legitimacy and public value .



### Youth Policy Recommendations & Systems Change Vision

Youth advanced clear policy recommendations, including:

- ➔ Implementing We Got Us tools in all schools and youth programs
- ➔ Establishing safe youth mental health spaces
- ➔ Creating Youth Policy Advisory Councils
- ➔ Launching a Peer Mental Health Ambassador Program
- ➔ Making We Got Us Day a citywide annual event
- ➔ Expanding the We Got Us Peer-to-Peer Certification across middle and high schools

These recommendations position We Got Us as a scalable, cost-effective public mental health strategy.

### Program Significance

We Got Us represents a critical evolution in PUDS' work:

- ➔ Positions youth as mental health leaders and educators
- ➔ Integrates healing justice into workforce and safety models



- ➔ Combines data, storytelling, public engagement, and policy
- ➔ Demonstrates readiness for citywide and national replication

What began as a youth call for safe spaces has grown into a recognized model for youth-led mental health justice.





## Youth Mental Health & Healing Justice Snapshot

**We Got Us:** Youth-led mental health leadership, research, and healing justice  
Incubated through the Summer Work Experience Program (SWEP), 2025

### We Got Us at a Glance



Implementation Year: 2025



Primary Site: East Orange, NJ



Program Context: SWEP  
(Earn-and-Learn)



Approach:

- ✓ Youth-led research
- ✓ Peer-to-peer mental health leadership
- ✓ Healing-centered design

### What Youth Told Us



**40%+**

felt anxious,  
overwhelmed,  
or depressed



**1 in 5**

reported serious  
thoughts of suicide

### Youth Engagement in 2025



**65 youth** completed a  
Youth Mental Health  
& School Climate Survey



**150+ youth** engaged in:

- ✓ Community mapping
- ✓ Listening circles
- ✓ Solution design



- ✓ Know Your Rights:  
Mental Health Toolkit
- ✓ Draft-Peer-to-Peer  
Mental Health Certification  
framework



### Inaugural We Got Us Community Day (Summer 2025)

- ✓ Hosted at the YMCA
- ✓ Youth-led healing circles
- ✓ Wellness-kit-distribution
- ✓ Peer mentoring & public education



A photograph of a person with dreadlocks, wearing a white hoodie and light-colored pants, standing at a wooden podium and speaking into a microphone. The setting is a formal legislative chamber with a high ceiling, ornate wood paneling, and a large circular mural on the wall. Several flags are visible in the background, and potted plants are placed on the podium and in the foreground. The text "SECTION 7. YOUTH VOICE & LIVED EXPERIENCE" is overlaid in white, bold, sans-serif font across the center of the image.

## SECTION 7. YOUTH VOICE & LIVED EXPERIENCE

Across all 2025 initiatives, youth voice was not a supplemental feature of programming—it was the foundation of program design, implementation, and impact. Partners Uplifting Our Daughters and Sons (PUDS) intentionally centered young people as decision-makers, leaders, and storytellers, grounded in the understanding that sustainable community change must be shaped by those most directly affected.

From entrepreneurship and workforce development to violence prevention and mental health leadership, youth consistently influenced program direction, defined success on their own terms, and contributed meaningfully to outcomes across all sites.

### **Youth as Leaders, Not Just Participants**

Across cities and program areas, youth stepped into visible, accountable leadership roles, including:

- ➔ Designing and launching their own businesses
- ➔ Serving as peer mentors, ambassadors, and facilitators
- ➔ Leading healing circles and community conversations
- ➔ Hosting public events, pop-up shops, and showcases
- ➔ Conducting research and presenting findings to adults and institutions

These leadership opportunities reinforced confidence, accountability, and ownership. Youth were trusted not only to participate, but to lead with intention, responsibility, and purpose—strengthening their sense of agency and belonging.

### **Youth as Leaders, Not Just Participants**

Youth participating in the Boss Up Teen Entrepreneurship Program consistently described entrepreneurship as transformative—not only as an income pathway, but as a source of confidence, dignity, and self-belief.



Common reflections included:

- ➔ Increased confidence in public speaking and decision-making
- ➔ A clearer understanding of money, pricing, and value
- ➔ Pride in creating and owning something of their own
- ➔ A renewed sense of possibility and legitimacy

One participant shared:

**“This program showed me that I don’t have to wait until I’m older for my ideas to matter.”**

Another reflected:

**“I didn’t know I could make money from something I created. Now I see a future for myself.”**

These insights highlight entrepreneurship as a pathway to agency, stability, and long-term aspiration.



### Reflections on Safety, Leadership & Violence Prevention

Youth engaged in Safe Passage, Junior Violence Interrupter, and leadership programming emphasized the importance of being seen, trusted, and respected within their schools and communities.

Participants spoke about:

- ➔ Learning how to de-escalate conflict in real time
- ➔ Feeling responsible for protecting and supporting peers
- ➔ Gaining respect from classmates and adults
- ➔ Understanding their role in creating safer environments



As one youth leader explained:

**“People listen to us because we’re going through the same things they are.”**

This peer credibility proved essential to prevention efforts, reinforcing youth leadership as a powerful public safety asset.

### Reflections on Mental Health & Healing (We Got Us)

Youth involved in We Got Us articulated a strong need for spaces where mental health could be discussed openly, without stigma, discipline, or fear.

Youth shared that:

- ➔ Talking to peers often felt safer than talking to adults
- ➔ Mental health struggles were frequently misunderstood or overlooked
- ➔ Healing required community, honesty, and shared language

During a listening circle, one youth reflected:

**“We don’t talk about this enough. When we do, it feels like a weight comes off.”**

Through research, storytelling, and public engagement, youth reframed mental health as a shared responsibility and a core component of safety, success, and well-being.



### Growth in Confidence, Voice & Aspiration

Across programs and locations, youth demonstrated consistent growth in:

- ➔ Confidence and self-expression
- ➔ Leadership and accountability
- ➔ Educational and career aspiration
- ➔ Civic awareness and community responsibility

Exposure to college campuses, public platforms, and real-world leadership opportunities expanded how youth viewed themselves and their futures.



As one participant shared:

**“Being in these spaces showed me that I belong here.”**

### Why Youth Voice Matters

Youth voice strengthened every dimension of PUDS’ work in 2025. By centering lived experience:

- ➔ Programs remained relevant and responsive
- ➔ Engagement and retention were strengthened
- ➔ Outcomes reflected real needs and aspirations
- ➔ Youth developed skills that extended beyond program timelines

PUDS’ commitment to youth voice ensures that impact is not only measurable, but meaningful, enduring, and rooted in the leadership of young people themselves.







## Youth Voice & Lived Experience

Centering Youth Agency Across 5 Cities in 2025

### Youth as Leaders, Not Just Participants






-  Launch businesses
-  Facilitate peer support
-  Host community pop-ups
-  Conduct youth-led research

### Reflections on Opportunity & Entrepreneurship

-  Confidence & financial skills
-  Pride in building something of their own
-  Hope for a future as entrepreneurs






### Reflections on Safety & Violence Prevention

-  De-escalation skills
-  Respect from peers & adults
-  Responsibility to keep schools safe






### Confidence on Mental Health & Healing

-  Public speaking & leadership
-  Education & career goals
-  Hope for a future for myself. +



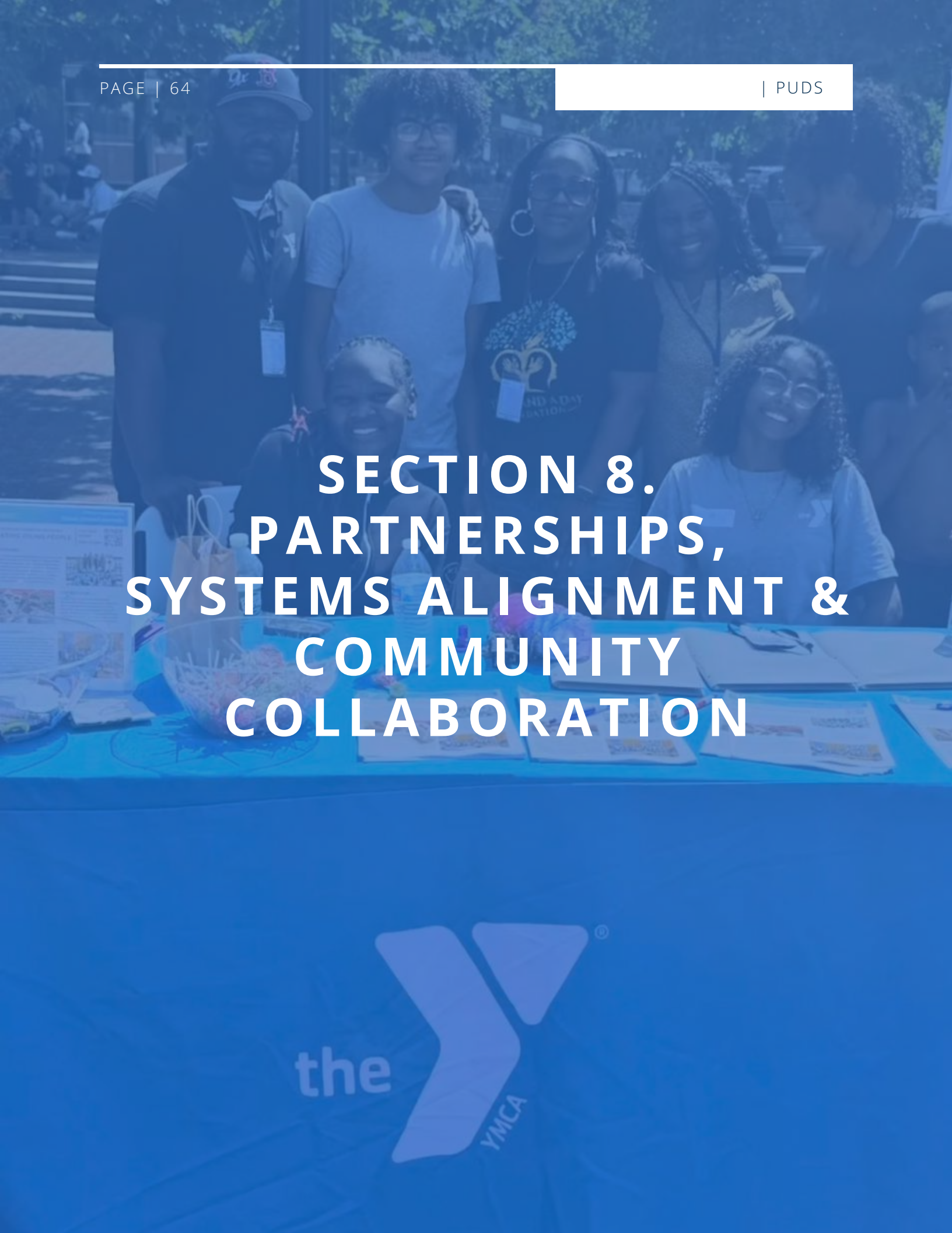
### Youth Voice & Lived Aspiration

-  Public speaking & leadership
-  Education & career goals
-  A sense of trust & community



Youth were valued as decision-makers, storytellers, and community leaders.





# SECTION 8. PARTNERSHIPS, SYSTEMS ALIGNMENT & COMMUNITY COLLABORATION





In 2025, Partners Uplifting Our Daughters and Sons (PUDS) advanced its mission through a robust, multi-sector network spanning education systems, municipal governments, higher education institutions, community-based organizations, public safety agencies, media partners, and philanthropic funders. These partnerships were essential to delivering youth-centered programming at scale, aligning initiatives with public systems, and ensuring sustainability beyond individual program cycles.

PUDS operated not as a standalone service provider, but as a trusted implementation and coordination partner—embedding youth voice, cultural relevance, and evidence-informed practice within institutions responsible for public safety, education, workforce development, and community well-being. This systems-embedded approach enabled PUDS to steward public and philanthropic investment responsibly while delivering measurable outcomes across multiple cities and states.

### **School District & Education System Partnerships**

PUDS partnered directly with public education systems to integrate entrepreneurship, mental health, workforce development, and violence prevention programming into students' daily learning environments.

Key education partners included:

#### **➔ East Orange Board of Education**

Partnered on Safe Passage, Boss Up, We Got Us, and youth leadership programming across multiple East Orange schools.

#### **➔ Newark Board of Education**

Collaborated on summer workforce development, entrepreneurship, and youth programming serving Newark students.

#### **➔ New York City Department of Education**

Supported multi-year Boss Up NYC implementation across multiple boroughs and City Council districts.

These partnerships ensured programming aligned with academic priorities, student needs, and district-level strategic goals while reinforcing schools as critical sites for prevention, opportunity, and leadership development.

## Higher Education & College Access Partnerships

Higher education institutions played a central role in PUDS' strategy of pairing economic opportunity with educational aspiration and long-term mobility.

Key college partners included:

### ➔ Essex County College

Hosted the Boss Up East Orange college-based entrepreneurship program for the second consecutive year, providing consistent exposure to postsecondary environments.

### ➔ Miles College

Served as the host site for the inaugural Boss Up Birmingham program, embedding entrepreneurship within an HBCU campus setting.

College-based implementation reinforced the message that higher education and entrepreneurship are complementary and attainable pathways—particularly for youth historically underrepresented in postsecondary spaces.

## Municipal & Government Partnerships

City and municipal partnerships enabled PUDS to align youth programming with public safety, workforce development, and violence prevention priorities, while ensuring public accountability and institutional integration.



Key municipal and government partners included:

### ➔ New York City Mayor's Office

Provided leadership support for youth workforce and entrepreneurship initiatives, including the original authorization and expansion of Boss Up NYC.

### ➔ New York City Council

Supported youth entrepreneurship, workforce development, and community-based programming through targeted city investments.



➔ **New York City Department of Youth and Community Development**

Served as a key partner in workforce-aligned youth programming and implementation support across New York City.

➔ **City of East Orange Mayor's Office**

Supported citywide youth empowerment, leadership development, and Safe Passage initiatives.

➔ **East Orange Mayor's Office of Employment and Training**

Partnered on Summer Work Experience and Earn + Learn workforce programming.

➔ **City of Newark Office of Violence Prevention and Trauma Recovery Services**

Collaborated on community violence intervention, Safe Passage, and youth prevention strategies.

➔ **City of Birmingham**

Partnered on youth entrepreneurship, leadership, and violence prevention initiatives aligned with citywide safety priorities.

➔ **City of Boston**

Supported the Boss Up Boston Summer Youth Work Experience Program and youth workforce initiatives.

These partnerships embedded PUDS' work within official municipal infrastructures, strengthening coordination, legitimacy, fiscal stewardship, and long-term sustainability.

### Community-Based & Youth-Serving Organization Partnerships

PUDS collaborated with trusted community institutions to ensure programs were accessible, culturally responsive, and deeply rooted in local contexts.

Key community partners included:

#### ➔ YMCA of Greater Boston

Partnered on Boss Up Boston programming, youth engagement, scholarships, and community events.

#### ➔ YMCA of East Orange

Hosted the inaugural We Got Us Community Day, supporting youth-led mental health engagement, healing circles, and public education.

These partnerships strengthened outreach, trust, and youth participation while reinforcing community ownership of program outcomes.

### Public Safety & Violence Prevention Partnerships

Public safety alignment ensured that youth leadership and prevention strategies complemented broader systems-level approaches.



Key partners included:

#### ➔ New Jersey Office of Violence Prevention and Prevention Services

Served as a primary funder and strategic partner for Safe Passage, community violence intervention, and youth leadership initiatives across New Jersey.

#### ➔ Birmingham Office of Community Safety Initiatives

Partnered on youth leadership, violence prevention, and aligned summer initiatives in Birmingham.

These collaborations positioned youth as credible contributors to safety while aligning community-based prevention with institutional public safety goals.



## Media, Culture & Youth Engagement Partnerships

Cultural and media partnerships played a critical role in engaging youth, amplifying positive narratives, and validating youth leadership in public spaces.

### ➔ Hot 97

Served as a key cultural partner in 2025, supporting youth engagement and visibility through:

- Principal for a Day activations, where artists visited schools to motivate and inspire students
- Support for the Annual Teen Entrepreneur Expo, providing cultural relevance, artist participation, and media amplification

This partnership bridged education, entrepreneurship, and culture—meeting young people where they are and reinforcing positive identity, aspiration, and leadership.

## Philanthropic & Capacity-Building Partnerships

Philanthropic investment enabled PUDS to expand beyond direct service delivery into capacity-building and field development.



### ➔ The Pinkerton Foundation

Invested \$100,000 to support PUDS' first-ever Boss Up Train-the-Trainer initiative, enabling PUDS to:

- Train seven community-based organizations in the Boss Up curriculum
- Provide implementation materials and technical assistance
- Support two partner organizations in graduating their own youth cohorts
- Establish a scalable model that multiplies impact beyond PUDS' direct footprint

This partnership marked a strategic shift toward systems-level growth, organizational maturity, and sustainable replication.

## Research, Evaluation & Curriculum Development Partnership

A core component of PUDS' ability to operate at scale is its partnership with the Institute of Research for Social Justice and Action (IRSJA), which serves as a key thought partner supporting data collection, evaluation, and curriculum development across programs.

In 2025, IRSJA partnered with PUDS to:

- ➔ Support data collection and analysis across entrepreneurship, workforce development, violence prevention, and mental health initiatives
- ➔ Strengthen evaluation frameworks that center youth voice while aligning with public and philanthropic accountability standards
- ➔ Co-develop and refine core curricula, including:
  - Boss Up Teen Entrepreneurship Program
  - We Got Us Youth Mental Health Model
  - Junior Violence Interrupter Program

This partnership ensured programming remained evidence-informed, culturally responsive, and adaptable across cities while maintaining consistency and quality as PUDS expanded.



### Why Systems Alignment Matters

Through intentional collaboration, PUDS was able to:

- ➔ Embed programming within schools, cities, colleges, and cultural institutions
- ➔ Align youth voice with institutional decision-making
- ➔ Scale impact across multiple states
- ➔ Leverage public, philanthropic, and media resources
- ➔ Build pathways from youth leadership to lasting systems change

PUDS' partnership model transforms individual programs into a coordinated ecosystem of opportunity, safety, healing, culture, and leadership—positioning the organization for long-term, community-driven impact and continued public trust.



## Partnerships, Systems Alignment & Community Collaboration

Building Sustainable Change Together in 2025

PUDS advanced its mission through cross-sector partnership spanning schools, colleges, municipalities, community organizations, public safety agencies, and foundation support. These partnerships were essential to delivering youth-centered programming at scale, aligning initiatives with public systems, and ensuring sustainability beyond individual program cycles.

### School District & Higher Education Partnerships

- Worked within schools & at HBCUs to host youth programs
- Aligned initiatives with local academic priorities
- Strengthened college access & aspirations



Key education partners included.



Newark Public Schools



### Municipal & Government Partnerships

- Collaborated with mayors & city agencies on public safety, workforce, & youth empowerment
- Secured public funding for multi-year initiatives



### Community-Based Organization Partnerships

- Teamed with trusted community & youth organizations
- Promoted culturally relevant & accessible programs
- Expanded reach through local institutions



### Foundation & Capacity-Building Partnerships

- Received capacity-building funding to scale beyond PUDS direct delivery footprint
- Trained 7 community organizations for broader implementation
- Co-developed evidence-informed programs & curricula



Systems alignment transformed individual programs into a coordinated ecosystem of opportunity, safety, healing and leadership.





## SECTION 9. SIGNATURE EVENTS, YOUTH SHOWCASES & PUBLIC VISIBILITY



In 2025, Partners Uplifting Our Daughters and Sons (PUDS) elevated youth entrepreneurship beyond program spaces through a series of high-visibility civic, cultural, academic, and citywide events. These signature showcases positioned young people as innovators, business owners, and leaders while providing real market exposure, civic recognition, and media amplification.

Together, these events demonstrate that youth entrepreneurship is not only a workforce strategy, but a public-facing intervention connected to economic mobility, violence prevention, cultural pride, and systems change.

### **SWEP-Fest: Citywide Youth Entrepreneurship Showcase**

East Orange, New Jersey

As part of the Summer Work Experience Program (SWEP), PUDS supported youth participation in SWEP-Fest, the City of East Orange's annual workforce celebration and public showcase.

At SWEP-Fest:

- ➔ Teen entrepreneurs operated pop-up shops, selling products directly to the public
- ➔ Youth showcased businesses developed through Earn-and-Learn programming
- ➔ Families, community members, and city leadership engaged directly with youth entrepreneurs

Supported by the City of East Orange, SWEP-Fest reinforced youth entrepreneurship as a visible and valued component of the city's workforce development strategy.

### **Media Coverage:**

SWEP-Fest and youth participation were featured in local news coverage documenting the closeout of East Orange's Summer Work Experience Program and highlighting youth innovation and achievement.



### Teen Explosion Youth Recognition Event

Bronx Borough Hall, New York City

PUDS partnered with the Bronx Borough President's Office to host the Teen Explosion Youth Recognition Event at Bronx Borough Hall.

At this civic showcase:

- ➔ More than 50 teen-owned businesses from the Boss Up Teen Entrepreneurship Program operated pop-up shops inside Borough Hall
- ➔ Youth received formal citations and public recognition from Vanessa Gibson, alongside City Council Members Althea Stevens and Kevin Riley
- ➔ Entrepreneurship was framed as a proactive response to community violence and instability

### Media Coverage:

The event was covered by PIX11 News, which highlighted how teen-owned businesses are directly challenging gun violence by creating opportunity, purpose, and economic pathways for young people.

### Juneteenth Youth Entrepreneurship Explosion

Brooklyn, New York

PUDS youth entrepreneurs from Boston, Newark, and East Orange participated in the Juneteenth Youth Entrepreneurship Explosion in Brooklyn, held in partnership with Farah Louis as part of her annual Juneteenth celebration.

At this multi-city convening:

- ➔ Over 100 teen entrepreneurs participated across pop-up shops and shared marketplaces
- ➔ Youth connected entrepreneurship to Juneteenth's legacy of freedom, ownership, and self-determination
- ➔ Students built cross-city relationships, strengthening a national youth entrepreneurship network

This event positioned youth entrepreneurship as both an economic and cultural expression, grounding business ownership in history, identity, and community empowerment.

### Media Coverage:

The Juneteenth Youth Entrepreneurship Explosion received coverage in community and ethnic media outlets documenting the Teen Entrepreneur Expo as part of Brooklyn's Juneteenth celebration.



### Miles College Commencement Youth Entrepreneurship Showcase

Birmingham, Alabama

In Birmingham, PUDS youth participating in the Boss Up Birmingham program were featured in a Youth Teen Entrepreneurship Showcase held in conjunction with commencement celebrations at Miles College.

During the showcase:

- ➔ Youth entrepreneurs operated pop-up shops on campus
- ➔ Businesses were presented to families, faculty, graduates, and community members
- ➔ Entrepreneurship was intentionally positioned alongside academic achievement



The event was attended by Bobbi Knight, President of Miles College, who publicly commended the youth and praised the innovation and leadership demonstrated through the program.

### Media Coverage:

Local Birmingham news outlets, including WVTM 13, highlighted youth earning startup funds, launching businesses, and building confidence through entrepreneurship programming delivered on the Miles College campus.

### Why Public Visibility Matters

These signature events did more than celebrate youth. They:

- ➔ Created real economic opportunities through public marketplaces
- ➔ Provided formal civic recognition from elected officials and institutions
- ➔ Strengthened partnerships with cities, colleges, and cultural leaders
- ➔ Generated earned media coverage that amplified positive youth narratives
- ➔ Positioned youth as innovators, leaders, and contributors to community safety

By intentionally placing youth entrepreneurs in civic halls, college campuses, cultural celebrations, and citywide festivals, PUDS ensured that young people were not only supported, but seen, validated, and respected in public life.



## Signature Events, Youth Showcases & Public Visibility

Elevating Youth Entrepreneurship into the Public Eye in 2025

In 2025, PUDS elevated youth entrepreneurship beyond program spaces through high-visibility civic, cultural, and citywide events—showcasing young people as innovators, business owners, and future leaders. These partnerships were essential to delivering youth-centered programming at scale, aligning initiatives with public systems, and ensuring sustainability beyond individual program cycles.

### SWEP-Fest: Citywide Youth Entrepreneurship Showcase

East Orange, NJ

As part of the Summer Work Experience Program (SWEP), PUDS supported youth participation in SWEP-Fest, the City of East Orange's annual workforce celebration and city.

Key education partners included:



### Municipal & Government Partnerships

Bronx Borough Hall, New York

- ✓ Boss Up teens operated pop-up shops inside Bronx Borough Hall
- ✓ Teens received formal citations from Borough President Vanessa Gibson

Key cities, NYC, East Orange, Birmingham, Newark and Boston



### Community-Based Organization Partnerships

- ✓ Partnered with trusted community & youth organizations
- ✓ Promoted culturally relevant & accessible programs

### Miles College Commencement Youth Entrepreneurship Showcase

- ✓ Youth entrepreneurs operated pop-up shops on campus



Public showcases positioned youth as economic innovators, civic contributors, and cultural stakeholders—generating media coverage and shifting public perceptions for young people.

# SECTION 10. DATA, EVALUATION & CONTINUOUS LEARNING

In 2025, Partners Uplifting Our Daughters and Sons (PUDS) implemented a structured, organization-wide approach to data collection, evaluation, and continuous learning across all program areas. Evaluation was not treated solely as a compliance requirement, but as a core strategy for strengthening program quality, centering youth voice, and informing responsible growth, replication, and long-term systems impact.

Data systems were intentionally aligned with the expectations of municipal, state, and philanthropic partners, while remaining accessible, relevant, and meaningful to youth participants and community stakeholders. This dual focus ensured accountability without sacrificing responsiveness to lived experience.

## 10.1 EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

PUDS' evaluation framework integrates quantitative performance metrics, qualitative youth voice, and program implementation data to assess outcomes across four interconnected domains

1. Participation & Engagement
2. Skill Development & Economic Outcomes
3. Safety, Wellness & Social-Emotional Growth
4. Leadership, Visibility & Systems Impact

This multi-dimensional framework allows PUDS to capture both measurable outputs and deeper indicators of individual, community, and systems-level transformation.

## 10.2 DATA COLLECTION METHODS

Across 2025 initiatives, PUDS utilized multiple data collection tools and methods, including:

- ➔ Enrollment and attendance tracking
- ➔ Pre- and post-program surveys
- ➔ Youth mental health and school climate surveys
- ➔ Business development milestones (business launches, pop-up participation, revenue activity)
- ➔ Earn + Learn participation records
- ➔ Event participation and public showcase documentation
- ➔ Media coverage tracking
- ➔ Youth reflections, listening circles, and focus groups

Data collection was conducted in coordination with school partners, workforce agencies, and municipal offices to ensure consistency, accuracy, and alignment with system-level reporting requirements.

### 10.3 PARTICIPATION, RETENTION & ENGAGEMENT OUTCOMES

Evaluation data consistently demonstrated strong engagement across both school-year and summer programming:

- ➔ High attendance and completion rates across multi-week initiatives
- ➔ Sustained participation in entrepreneurship, leadership, and violence prevention programs
- ➔ Strong retention within Earn + Learn models tied to stipends, accountability, and real-world outcomes

Findings reinforced that youth engagement was strongest when programs combined economic opportunity, leadership responsibility, and public visibility—validating PUDS' integrated, opportunity-centered program model.

### 10.4 ECONOMIC & WORKFORCE INDICATORS

PUDS tracked economic and workforce outcomes as core indicators of success, particularly within Boss Up and workforce-aligned programming.



Key indicators included:

- ➔ Youth-owned businesses launched
- ➔ Participation in pop-up shops and public marketplaces
- ➔ Youth-generated revenue activity
- ➔ Distribution of Earn + Learn stipends
- ➔ Completion of entrepreneurship training milestones

These measures demonstrated that youth were not only acquiring knowledge, but actively participating in legitimate economic activity tied to skill development, accountability, and long-term workforce readiness.



## 10.5 SAFETY, WELLNESS & MENTAL HEALTH INDICATORS

Safety, wellness, and mental health outcomes were evaluated using both direct and indirect measures, including:

- ➔ Youth-reported stress levels, sense of belonging, and emotional wellbeing
- ➔ Perceptions of school climate and safety
- ➔ Participation in peer leadership and violence prevention roles
- ➔ Engagement in healing-centered activities, including We Got Us

Youth-generated data informed program design, community engagement strategies, and policy-oriented recommendations, ensuring responsiveness to lived experience and evolving community needs.



## 10.6 YOUTH VOICE AS AN EVALUATION TOOL

Youth voice was intentionally embedded throughout the evaluation process. Young people contributed to:

- ➔ Survey design and administration  
Interpretation of findings
- ➔ Public presentation of data and insights
- ➔ Development of program and policy recommendations

This participatory evaluation approach strengthened data validity while reinforcing youth leadership, ownership, and civic engagement.

## 10.7 CONTINUOUS LEARNING & PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT

Evaluation findings were actively used to refine programming in real time. In 2025, data-informed decision-making supported:

- ➔ Expansion of college-based program delivery
- ➔ Increased emphasis on public showcases and pop-up marketplaces
- ➔ Development of peer-to-peer mental health leadership models
- ➔ Launch of the Boss Up Train-the-Trainer initiative
- ➔ Deeper alignment between entrepreneurship, violence prevention, and healing-centered strategies

Ongoing feedback loops between youth, staff, and partners ensured that lessons learned translated directly into program improvements and strategic adaptation.

## 10.8 REPORTING & ACCOUNTABILITY

PUDS maintained transparent and timely reporting practices aligned with partner requirements, including:

- ➔ Regular grant and contract reports
- ➔ Funder-specific deliverables
- ➔ City and state impact summaries
- ➔ Public-facing impact narratives

Evaluation findings were shared with school districts, municipal agencies, and philanthropic partners, including the New Jersey Office of Violence Prevention and Prevention Services and The Pinkerton Foundation, reinforcing institutional trust and accountability.




## 10.9 LOOKING AHEAD

PUDS will continue to strengthen its evaluation capacity by:

- ➔ Standardizing cross-site data tools
- ➔ Expanding longitudinal tracking of youth outcomes
- ➔ Deepening youth participation in evaluation and applied research
- ➔ Leveraging data to support replication, sustainability, and systems influence

Data—when paired with youth leadership and lived experience—remains a cornerstone of PUDS' strategy for measurable, meaningful, and scalable impact.





## Data, Evaluation & Continuous Learning

Elevating Youth-Centered Growth & Accountability in 2025

PUDS integrated youth-centered evaluation across all program areas through high-visibility civic, cultural, and citywide events—showcasing young people as innovators, business owners, and future leaders.





Data systems were intentionally aligned with the expectations of municipal, state, and philanthropic partners, while remaining accessible, relevant, and meaningful to youth participants and community stakeholders. This dual focus ensured accountability without sacrificing responsiveness.

### 1 Our Multi-Dimensional Evaluation Framework

Tracking participation, youth-led outcomes, and community-level impact over time.

- 1 Surveys
- 2 Focus Groups & Reflections
- 3 Attendance Tracking
- 4 Earn + Learn Participation Records
- 4 Leadership & Systems Impact

Used to inform program adjustments and validate outcomes.

Local media partners included:  EAST ORANGE  NYC  Building 8.3  MLES

### 2 Robust Data Collection Methods

- ✓ Surveys
- ✓ Focus Groups & Reflections
- ✓ Attendance Tracking
- ✓ Earn + Learn Participation Records
- ✓ Business Milestones


Used to inform program adjustments and validate outcomes.

### 3 Learnings From 2025 Evaluation

- ✓ 90%+ Sustained Completion Rates
- ✓ \$250K+ Earn + Learn Stipends Distributed
- ✓ 65 Youth Generated Research Respondents

Learnings From 2025 Evaluation Used rich feedback loops to refine, align & expand programs.

Youth played an active role in creating, interpreting, and applying data—building a culture of shared learning, accountability, and innovation.





A woman with blonde hair, wearing a yellow sweater, is sitting at a table. She is smiling and looking towards the camera. On the table in front of her is a large, colorful, knitted or crocheted item, possibly a blanket or a large bag, with various patterns and colors. The background is a blurred indoor setting, possibly a workshop or a classroom, with shelves and other people visible in the distance. The entire image has a blue overlay.

## SECTION 11. SUSTAINABILITY, GROWTH & LOOKING AHEAD

In 2025, Partners Uplifting Our Daughters and Sons (PUDS) demonstrated not only strong programmatic outcomes, but organizational readiness for long-term sustainability, replication, and systems-level growth. With proven impact across multiple cities, increasing public visibility, and deep partnerships spanning education, workforce development, public safety, and philanthropy, PUDS is positioned to scale its work while maintaining fidelity to its youth-centered mission.

The organization's forward strategy is grounded in capacity-building, systems integration, and youth leadership, rather than one-off or site-limited programming.

## **NATIONAL LEADERSHIP, KNOWLEDGE SHARING & DEMAND FOR REPLICATION**

In 2025, Partners Uplifting Our Daughters and Sons further solidified its role as a national leader in youth workforce development and economic opportunity. Dr. Jamila T. Davis, Program Director of PUDS, was invited to serve as the keynote speaker at the annual conference of the National Youth Employment Coalition, held in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

In addition to the keynote address, Dr. Davis facilitated a workshop on the Boss Up Teen Entrepreneurship Program, sharing the model's Earn-and-Learn framework, youth-centered curriculum, and multi-city implementation strategy with workforce leaders, practitioners, and municipal representatives from across the country.

The session generated significant interest from cities and organizations seeking to adopt the Boss Up model within their own workforce and youth development systems.

These conversations reinforced both the relevance of the program and the growing demand for structured replication support.

Together, the keynote and workshop marked a pivotal moment for PUDS' evolution from program implementation to national field leadership, directly informing the organization's decision to expand its Train-the-Trainer strategy and prepare for broader multi-city adoption in 2026 and beyond.

## 11.1 A SUSTAINABILITY MODEL BUILT FOR SCALE

PUDS' sustainability approach rests on three interconnected pillars:

### Diversified Funding

PUDS leverages a blend of public funding, municipal partnerships, and philanthropic investment to support both direct services and innovation. This diversified model strengthens organizational stability while allowing flexibility to pilot and expand new approaches.

### Systems Integration

Programs are embedded within school districts, workforce systems, public safety infrastructure, and higher education institutions. This alignment increases durability, relevance, and the likelihood that initiatives continue beyond individual grant cycles.

### Capacity Building Over Time

Rather than scaling solely through staff expansion, PUDS is intentionally building shared infrastructure that allows high-quality programming to be delivered by trusted partners in multiple communities.



## 11.2 GROWTH & EXPANSION PRIORITIES

Building on momentum from 2025, PUDS' growth priorities include:

- ➔ Expanding college-based entrepreneurship and leadership programming
- ➔ Replicating Boss Up and We Got Us across additional cities and regions
- ➔ Deepening the integration of mental health, healing justice, and violence prevention
- ➔ Strengthening youth pathways from program participation to leadership, paid roles, and postsecondary opportunities

These priorities reflect PUDS' commitment to scale with intention, not dilution.

## 11.3 INVESTING IN YOUTH LEADERSHIP PIPELINES

PUDS' long-term vision centers youth not only as participants, but as:

- ➔ Entrepreneurs and economic contributors
- ➔ Peer leaders and mentors
- ➔ Community safety partners
- ➔ Researchers, storytellers, and advocates

Future initiatives will continue to support youth transitions into leadership roles that extend beyond program timelines and into adulthood.

## 11.4 LAUNCHING THE BOSS UP TRAIN-THE-TRAINER MODEL

A defining milestone of 2025 was the successful pilot of the Boss Up Train-the-Trainer initiative, made possible through catalytic support from The Pinkerton Foundation.

This investment allowed PUDS to test a new approach to scale — one that prioritizes quality, consistency, and community ownership.



Through the 2025 pilot:

- ➔ Seven community-based organizations were trained in the Boss Up Teen Entrepreneurship curriculum
- ➔ Partner organizations received structured materials, facilitation guidance, and implementation support
- ➔ Two partner organizations successfully implemented Boss Up with their own youth cohorts, whose students completed the program and graduated
- ➔ PUDS validated a replication model focused on fidelity, coaching, and shared standards

This marked a strategic shift from PUDS operating solely as a direct service provider to functioning as a capacity builder and field leader.



## 11.5 SCALING TRAIN-THE-TRAINER INTO 2026

Building on the success of the pilot, PUDS will expand the Train-the-Trainer model in 2026 as a core growth strategy designed to extend high-quality, youth-centered programming through trusted local partners.

Planned next steps include:

- ➔ Launching Train-the-Trainer cohorts in new cities and regions
- ➔ Formalizing onboarding, coaching, and evaluation tools for partner organizations
- ➔ Aligning the model with school districts, workforce agencies, and public safety systems
- ➔ Positioning Train-the-Trainer as a sustainable pathway for national replication

Through this expansion, PUDS will equip youth-serving organizations, educators, and community-based practitioners with the tools, curriculum, and support needed to deliver trauma-informed entrepreneurship, leadership, and prevention programming with fidelity.

By investing in people and partnerships, PUDS can extend its reach without compromising program integrity or youth voice—while strengthening sustainability by embedding proven models within local systems and reducing reliance on single-site direct service delivery.

## 11.6 ORGANIZATIONAL LEARNING & READINESS

As PUDS scales, the organization remains committed to:

- ➔ Data-informed decision-making
- ➔ Continuous learning with partners and stakeholders
- ➔ Youth voice in program design and evaluation
- ➔ Transparent reporting and accountability

Lessons from 2025 will continue to shape program refinement, partnership strategy, and resource allocation.



## 11.7 VISION FOR THE FUTURE

PUDS envisions a future where:

- ➔ Youth entrepreneurship is recognized as a core workforce and prevention strategy
- ➔ Mental health support is peer-led, accessible, and culturally responsive
- ➔ Young people are visible leaders in civic, cultural, and economic spaces
- ➔ Communities invest in youth as solutions, not liabilities

With demonstrated impact, strong partnerships, and a tested replication model, PUDS is prepared to deepen and expand its work in 2026 and beyond.

## Sustainability, Growth & Looking Ahead

Scaling Youth-Centered Impact With Integrity

Positioned for national replication through systems alignment, capacity building, and youth leadership

### Proven Readiness for Scale

- Multi-City Impact (2025)**  
New Jersey • New York • Alabama • Massachusetts
- Embedded in Public Systems**  
Schools • Workforce • Public Safety • Higher Education
- Youth-Centered by Design**  
Leadership • Voice • Lived Experience

### National Leadership & Field Influence

- National Leadership Recognition**
- Keynote Speaker**  
National Youth Employment Coalition Annual Conference
- Boss Up Model Shared Nationally**
- Earn-and-Learn Youth Entrepreneurship**
- Growing Demand for Replication**
- Cities and organizations requesting adoption support

Local media partners listed: **EAST ORANGE** **NYC** **MILES** [Dinwiddie, VA]

### PUDS Sustainability Framework

- Diversified Funding**
  - Public funding • Municipal investment
  - Philanthropy
- Boss Up Model Shared Nationally**
  - Earn-and-Learn • Youth Entrepreneurship
  - Multi-City Implementation
- Cities and organizations requesting adoption support

### 4 Boss Up Train-the-Trainer – 2025 Pilot

- Next Phase (2026+)**
- Launch Train-the-Trainer cohorts in new regions
- Formalize coaching, and evaluation tools
- Deeper integration districts & workforce agencies
- Scale without compromising youth voice or program fidelity

**puds**  
empowering youth, one neighborhood at a time

## CLOSING & ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The impact reflected in this 2025 Impact Report was made possible through the collective commitment of a powerful community of young people, partners, institutions, and supporters who believe in opportunity, leadership, and the transformative potential of youth.

First and foremost, we honor the young people who showed up with courage, creativity, and purpose. Your ideas, businesses, leadership, and voices are the foundation of this work. This report exists because of your brilliance, resilience, and willingness to imagine and build something greater for yourselves and your communities.

We extend deep gratitude to the staff, facilitators, and practitioners of Partners Uplifting Our Daughters and Sons (PUDS), whose care, adaptability, and unwavering commitment brought these programs to life across cities and states. Your work—both visible and behind the scenes—ensured that programming remained youth-centered, responsive, and grounded in lived experience.



We thank our community and institutional partners, including school districts, colleges and universities, workforce agencies, municipal leaders, and community-based organizations, for opening doors, sharing space, and working alongside us to create real opportunity. This work is sustained through collaboration, trust, and a shared belief in what is possible when systems align around youth.

We are deeply grateful to our funding partners whose investments made innovation, expansion, and capacity-building possible. Your support allowed PUDS not only to serve young people directly, but to strengthen infrastructure, pilot scalable models, and build systems that can sustain impact over time.

We also acknowledge the media and cultural partners who helped amplify youth voices and elevate narratives that reflect young people as leaders, entrepreneurs, and problem-solvers. Your platforms ensured that this work was not only done, but seen, valued, and respected.





Finally, we recognize the parents, caregivers, educators, artists, mentors, public officials, and community members who supported young people at every step. This report reflects a shared truth: when youth are resourced, trusted, and celebrated, entire communities are strengthened.

The 2025 program year represents a defining moment for Partners Uplifting Our Daughters and Sons. What began as programmatic innovation has evolved into a scalable, youth-driven ecosystem grounded in opportunity, healing, and leadership. With continued partnership and investment, PUDS is positioned to grow responsibly while remaining rooted in equity, accountability, and youth voice.

As we look ahead, we carry forward the lessons, relationships, and momentum of 2025 with gratitude and renewed commitment—continuing to build pathways that affirm possibility, foster leadership, and create lasting change.