

## JVS Boston Report on Year One 2021, Submitted 12/30/2022

**JVS Boston enrolled 207 participants**, 22 more than planned. Of those, **168 (81%) completed training successfully**, exceeding our goal of 167 completers. Following the pandemic, JVS is experiencing lower than normal completion rates, which typically exceed 90%. We are seeing both lower completions and lower start rates of candidates accepted into training. To explore this phenomenon of accepted candidates “ghosting” us, we launched a “ghost-buster” project to contact them and identify the cause. The results match our experience with those who enroll but do not complete—essentially a wide range of personal issues, including emergent family and dependent care needs, domestic violence, moving suddenly, etc. The post-Covid reality is that a variety of intense stressors are making people’s lives extremely chaotic, and personal resilience and support systems are already exhausted and collapse easily. This is unfortunately affecting every factor—enrollments, completion, job placement, and job retention.

**Of those completing training, 142 (85%) entered employment in 157 jobs.** This number is not final, and we believe that it will continue to increase over the next three months. Our placement rates for our most recent cycles are lower than our overall placement rate, and there are two certification issues affecting Certified Nursing Assistants (CNA) and Pharmacy Technicians (PT).

First, CNA candidates in Massachusetts experienced significant pandemic-related issues with both qualification and with examinations. The pandemic closed down the skilled nursing facilities to all non-essential personnel, preventing CNA candidates from completing a required practicum, and the Commonwealth’s testing vendor dropped their statewide testing contract, preventing anyone from taking the required examination. This year, many graduates have not been able to secure testing dates and are working uncertified under a federal waiver, which was extended at the eleventh hour on September 30.

Second, Pharmacy Technicians take a national examination, but have been unable to secure testing promptly as those vendors are understaffed, with many waiting months to sit the exam. Unfortunately, there is no waiver to work as a Certified Pharmacy Technician, and many are unable to start work promptly following program completion. We are continuing to work with our graduates until they achieve certification and employment. At the same time, we are doing everything we can to compensate for the systems issues that are impacting them and their employment.

Of those entering employment, 133 placements occurred at least 90 days prior to this report, affording the opportunity to retain employment for 90 days. **Of those, 114 (86%) have retained their employment at least 90 days.** This figure will fluctuate as additional completers enter employment and as both new and recent placements have the opportunity to retain 90 days.

Average annual wages of those trained to be a **Certified Nursing Assistant** (nurse’s aide for long-term care) are \$37,974 for 103 people. This significantly exceeds our historical wages of \$29,000 as well as exceeding average industry wages of \$36,000. The wages have steadily risen over time, with the most recent two cycles achieving an average wage of \$45,963 and \$42,052.

Those trained to be a **Certified Central Sterile Processing Technician** achieved average annual wages of \$44,890 for 6 people. As this was a pilot, we did not have baseline data to use for our projections. However, we significantly exceeded our projection of \$37,000.

For those trained to be a **Certified Pharmacy Technician**, average annual earnings were \$41,920 for 23 people, significantly exceeding our historical wages of \$32,000 but falling short of industry projection of \$45,000. Ten of those placed exceeded our projected wage of \$45,000 while 13 did not, and one part time placement is pulling down the average wage farther. Overall, wages did rise over the year, with those placed in the second half of the year 37% more likely to achieve the target wage than those placed in the first half of the year.

Finally, for those trained to be a **Patient Care Technician** (nurse's aide for acute care, not certified), the average annual earnings are \$35,458 for 10 people. As this was a pilot, we did not have baseline data to use for our projections, although we were hoping to achieve an average of \$39,000. This single cycle was at the beginning of the year, and saw wages similar to CNA graduates at that time, which were \$34,693 for the cycle beginning one month sooner and \$37,954 for the cycle beginning one month later. As this training continues over time, we expect to see similar wages to our Certified Nursing Assistant training.

Overall, although our results are lower than normal for us, our impacts are still leading in our field and exceed those of most training providers. Our wages achieved are all higher than our historical experience.

### **Strategies for the Future**

Going forward, we have implemented additional client supports to promote program completion and job placement. We are adding training stipends for all training participants, to be disbursed to refillable pay cards open achievement of each of three milestones. We have added a pool of flex funds, to help clients experiencing a financial emergency. And we are adding a team of referral specialists who are developing deep knowledge and expertise in helping clients secure specialized support services (housing, childcare, domestic violence, etc.). This will allow agency Career Coaches to focus on job readiness and placement, while helping those who need specialized support.

We also know that it is taking clients longer to complete certification and enter employment. For all our grants, we will be extending the reporting period to allow participants the additional time they need. For example, a recent pharmacy technician cohort that began six months ago currently has only 50% of graduates placed into employment, a much lower rate than previous cohorts this year. Therefore in the current environment, we know that we should be reporting on that cohort 9 months after it starts, in order to allow enough time for placements and for the data to represent the actual outcomes.

Finally, to accommodate testing delays, we are implementing pre-test refreshers to help students prepare for exams that come months after course completion. For CNA candidates, this includes an in-person demonstration of patient care with volunteers, not simply an information refresh. For Pharmacy Technician candidates, this includes adaptation to the evolving testing methods along with advocacy for testing conditions to be consistent. For example, the testing center is supposed to provide test takers with a whiteboard and dry erase pen, but this has not been happening. We are expecting lower than normal pass rates based on the long delays and improper test conditions, and will continue to pay

testing fees for those reattempting certification. And we continue to advocate for systems changes to alleviate the testing backlogs for both CNAs and Pharmacy Technicians, including working employers, associations, state officials, and government affairs advisors.

Construction of ArLab Healthcare and Biotechnology Career Institute is proceeding, with an anticipated opening in Fall 2023. The patient care, biotechnology, and sterile processing simulations require significant specialized equipment as well as plumbing, electrical, and HVAC upgrades. In order to open as soon as possible and prioritize the spaces serving the most significant numbers, the opening of the sterile processing simulation will be delayed a few months. This will allow time for the water capacity upgrade that cannot be performed until Boston lifts its seasonal moratorium on digging under the street, and for the electrical upgrade which requires backordered equipment. Current water and electrical capacity are sufficient to support operation of the patient care, pharmacy, and biotechnology simulations.

## JVS Boston Campaign

*Boston Description:* Founded in 1938 to assist immigrants entering the U.S. workforce, JVS Boston is now the oldest and largest provider of adult education in the greater Boston area. Having built a reputation for delivering strong outcomes, they served over 15,000 people last year in over 35 programs targeting 8 job sectors with trainings ranging from 4 weeks to 15 months. Among JVS Boston trainees, only 44% of clients were working at the time of enrollment, earning a median wage of just \$13/hour with an average of 25 hours/week or approximately \$17k/yr. The demographic makeup of a typical training is approximately 50% African Americans, 20% White, 13% Asian, 10% Multiracial, 10% Other with an overlapping 25% identifying as Latinx.

In addition, JVS Boston has extended their work to serve people with disabilities and those learning English as a second language - clients speak more than 80 languages and represent over 100 countries. Where English as a Second Language is a training component 41% are Caribbean, 32% are from Central or South America, 14% are from Africa, 7% from Asia, and 7% are from the U.S., Europe and the Middle East. In Boston, immigrants make up 29% of Boston's population, but limited English proficiency, lower education levels, and lack of career ladders in some employment settings are major barriers to economic security and financial independence. As a result, employed immigrants in Boston earn 29% less per year than native born workers.

In Boston, where the healthcare industry employs 20% of all workers, the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in even higher demand for qualified jobs applicants. This winter and spring, staff received frequent requests from employers in urgent need of pharmacy technicians and nurse's aides. Some employers are accelerating their hiring process, paying signing bonuses, and completing the onboarding process in a matter of days. Currently, the demand by employers in both fields is extremely high, resulting in a large number of quality job opportunities available to training graduates.

**Certified Nursing Assistant:** Each 14-week training prepares participants to work as skilled caregivers to frail elders in the community. The training includes: 1) 10 weeks of JVS training (35 hours per week) in Vocational English language, medical terminology, computer training, professional development, and techniques for working with frail elders; 2) A three-week CNA Certification course with the Academy for Healthcare Training, with 105 hours of classroom instruction; 3) A one-week clinical practicum at a long-term care facility providing hands-on care to elders; 4) One-on-one job search support with each program graduate to secure training-related positions in the healthcare field while they study to pass the CNA exam; 5) After passing the CNA exam and receiving a certificate, graduates receive additional job search support to obtain a career pathway nursing job; and 6) Ongoing post-placement support and career counseling for a year. Before enrolling, trainees earned an average of \$18,000/yr. After the training, graduates typically earn an average of \$29,000/yr.

**Patient Care Technician (PCT):** The 8-week course is a critical upskilling program for CNA's, NAs and HHAs working in acute care facilities. The training program provides students with skills through patient simulations and learning how to operate industry equipment. Students will graduate from the program with a Home Health Aide and Acute Care Nursing Assistant Certificate and will be prepared to enter a degree-seeking program at any accredited nursing college. Students also have the option to participate in an additional 7-week track in Phlebotomy and EKG and will be eligible for the national Patient Care

Technician exam. Overall, more than 70% of direct patient care is provided by nursing assistants in acute care settings, and qualified candidates continue to be in high demand by healthcare employers in the region. This is a new course. JVS Boston will report on pre-and post-training wages.

**Certified Pharmacy Technician:** Each 12-week training cycle includes: 1) JVS classroom instruction (24 hours per week) on medications and anatomy, pharmacy law, hospital basics, pharmacy math, customer service, professional development, and inventory; 2) An industry externship (9.5 hours per week) with a major retail or hospital pharmacy in Greater Boston, giving students industry-specific skills and hands-on experience; 3) One-on-one job search support, working with each program graduate to secure a high-demand, career pathway job after attaining a national Pharmacy Technician certificate; and 4) Ongoing post-placement support and career counseling for a year. Before enrolling, trainees earned an average of \$18,000/yr. After the training, graduates typically earn an average of \$32,000/yr.

**Certified Sterile Processing Technician (SPT):** The comprehensive 12-week course will train students to clean, sterilize, reassemble, package, store, label, and deliver surgical instruments to the necessary hospital departments. In addition to preparation for the examination, 400-hour externship, and certification process, the training places an emphasis on critical decision-making in order to prioritize and meet daily goals. This is a new course. JVS Boston will report on pre-and post-training wages.

*Boston Campaign Goal:* To launch the partnership and the first FP healthcare job training campaign, JVS Boston's will raise \$500,000 to be matched with \$250,000 from Focusing Philanthropy. Both partners will raise donations from June 1 to December 31, 2021. Donors will submit their contributions to Focusing Philanthropy and all funds, including FP matching dollars, will be disbursed by FP to JVS Boston to implement the campaign.

*Boston Impact:* In response to market trends and projections, JVS will provide occupational skills training in 4 high demand occupations:

- Certified Nursing Assistant (nurse's aide for long-term care, average earnings \$36k/yr.)
- Patient Care Technician (nurse's aide for acute care, not certified, average earnings \$39k/yr.)
- Certified Pharmacy Technician (average earnings \$45k/yr.)
- Certified Central Sterile Processing Technician (average earnings \$37k/yr.)

In these training tracks, JVS Boston will serve 185 participants in 2021 at a cost of approximately \$3,917 per student. Expected impacts are:

- 167 (90%) will complete training successfully
- 153 (92%) of graduates will secure employment
- 141 (92%) of those placed will retain their job for at least 90 days