

Linkage Revenue Supports Workforce Development

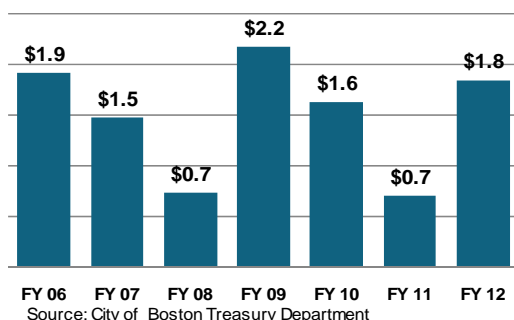
The flexibility in linkage funds helps programs and neighborhoods most in need

Linkage funds, generated by large-scale commercial developers, have supported a variety of workforce development programs in Boston since 1987. The Neighborhood Jobs Trust (NJT) approves the distribution of these funds to non-profit organizations who provide pre-employment job training, occupational skills upgrading to low wage workers, career counseling programs, and adult literacy programs including GED studies and English as a second language. Because there are few allocation restrictions on linkage money, it can be used on programs and in neighborhoods with the greatest need.

How Does Linkage Affect Job Programs?

The linkage program, authorized by CH 371 of the Acts of 1987, requires large-scale commercial developers seeking a zoning variance to make an exaction to the City. Since 2006, developers have been required to pay \$9.44 per sq. ft. after the first 100,000 sq. ft., with \$1.57 per sq. ft. assigned to job programs and the rest allocated to [affordable housing](#). Jobs payments are due in two installments over the course of one year. The timing of commercial development projects combined with a one-year payment schedule can cause unpredictability in annual receipts.

NJT Fund Revenue 2006-2012
In Millions



The NJT

The NJT approves the allocation of linkage funds based on recommendations by the City's Office of Jobs and Community Services (JCS) and distributes the funds through grants awarded in an RFP process. JCS has the responsibility for managing all workforce development funds for Boston. An NJT-funded pre-employment program will only receive its full grant if it can deliver its promised results. JCS continuously monitors enrollment and retention and holds programs to a stringent minimum 60% job placement rate. Other programs have different performance requirements. Language acquisition for literacy programs, promotions for those with jobs, transitions to college, and new career tracks are among other negotiated achievement standards.

The NJT's only allocation restriction is that programs must provide employment services to low-to-moderate income Bostonians age 18 or older. This flexibility enables JCS to fill gaps between more restrictive public grants and fund innovative programs. Currently, the NJT funds programs that train medical assistants, energy auditors, and teach English, among others.

The NJT's Major Programs

Since 2006, through linkage awards of \$4.8M, the NJT funded seats in pre-employment training programs and placed an average of 66% of them in new or better jobs. The NJT's largest-funded program, SkillWorks, a career advancement initiative and public-private partnership, has enrolled 1,420 Bostonians since 2009, with 774 obtaining a new job, raise, or promotion and has awarded 637 skills credentials during that time. The NJT's largest-funded literacy program, English for New Bostonians, has served 7,966 residents since 2006.